Changes in a Changeless World

Continuity and Discontinuity in Japanese Enka Music

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to investigate changes and continuity in the Japanese musical genre *enka*. Enka is a form of sentimental ballad music which is said to sing the heart/soul of Japan. An enka song is made to sound very traditional, yet the genre in itself is not that old. The genre was invented during the 1960s, and no song which matches the characteristics of the genre was released before the mid-1950s. Since the songs in the enka genre are made to sound traditional, both on a musical and textual level, it is hard to image that any changes to the genre would have occurred during its lifespan. When one listens to an enka song, this sentiment seem to hold true, since the songs sound old-fashioned, which is fitting for a genre which mostly appeals to an older audience. Nevertheless, as is the case with most forms of art, it is likely that enka songs have been influenced by the time they are written and released in. Furthermore, since Japanese society has gone through tremendous changes since the 1950s, it is hard to imagine that the enka genre has stayed as static as it may seem at first glance. The object of this thesis is therefore to investigate if there have occurred any changes or not in the genre, as well as to analyse any changes discovered.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Enka is a Japanese musical genre which developed from various musical styles during the mid-fifties. These genres consist of both older and more modern styles, as well as both traditional Japanese and modern Western styles. Furthermore, although the genre has gone through various changes in its more than half-century spanning lifetime, mostly concerning demographics and popularity, it can often seem rather static and timeless. This timelessness makes it so that a song made in the 2000s can be mistaken for one made in the 1970s. It can therefore be hard to determine if the song sung by an enka artist is brand new, or if the song is an older one from the singers younger day, or even if it is a cover version of a song another enka singer made famous.

Japan is currently the second largest music market in the world. However, very little of the music produced there is exported outside its borders and even less is exported to the West.[1] In fact, the only Japanese song to reach the number one position on the American Billboard chart was "Ue wo Muite Arukō" (literally "Let Us Take a Walk Looking Up", but known as "Sukiyaki" in English speaking countries) in 1963. Other than the above mentioned song, few Japanese artists have enjoyed any success in the United States of America. Examples of artists who have tried to reach into the Western market includes Utada Hikaru, one of the best selling artists in Japan. Utada released an English-language album and a few singles in the United States and Europe. However, despite receiving some good reviews she only managed to achieve limited success in the West. Utada gave up her foray into the Western market and moved back to Japan where she continued to focus on the Japanese market.

Enka has had even less exposure in the West, the only exception is Itsuki Hiroshi and a few other enka singers, who make a substantial income by performing in Las Vegas and similar locations. However, their audience is usually Japanese or Japanese Americans. Outside of Japan, enka has only managed to enjoy some popularity in eastern Asia, especially in Taiwan and South Korea.[2]

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1 Takayama Midori, *Japanese Music Industry Steps-Up Export Drive,* RIAJ, 2008. http://www.ifpi.org/content/library/riaj_release_feb2011.pdf (14.09.2011)

2 Linda Fujie, "Popular Music", in *Handbook of Japanese Popular Culture*, edited by Richard Gid Powers and Hidetoshi Kato, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 213.

1.1 Research Question

What I will do in this master thesis is to analyse enka music from 1955 up until the present, mostly focusing on thematic and textual changes the genre has gone through. I will explore how the genre has changed during the time period, or if it has changed at all. I will also see if it is possible to correlate any changes in enka with societal changes in Japan at large. To achieve this, I will use previous research on the subject. I will also analyse 110 enka songs released between the year 1955 and the year 2010. These songs will be separated into 10 songs per half-decade in order to equally analyse the emotional and thematic changes the genre has gone through during this period of time.

The reason why any possible continuity, or any possible discontinuity, is interesting is because enka is generally considered to be the heart/soul of Japan.[3] It is therefore worth exploring whether the changes in Japanese society and in the mindset of the Japanese people are reflected in the lyrics of enka songs, and if there even exist any changes in the textual and thematic content of enka songs at all.

Another reason for why this is an interesting topic is the fact that there has not been conducted much research in this field. Christine Yano wrote extensively on enka in her book "Tears of Longing: *Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song*"[4]. However, Yano never explored any continuity or discontinuity in that particular work.

I will not, however, analyse the songs musically, since music theory is not part of my field of specialisation, and I do not have sufficient knowledge about musical theory. I also think that Okada & Groemer, as well as Yano, have previously more than satisfactorily divulged on the matter in their respective works. However, I will give a short introduction of the musical characteristics of enka later in this chapter, mostly based on the excellent works by the these authors.

1.2 Defining enka

In order to see if there have occurred any changes in enka, or if the genre is living in a continuously static state, I will first provide a short definition of what enka is.

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3 Christine R. Yano, "Cover up: Emergent Authenticity in a Japanese Popular Music Genre" in *Play it Again: Cover Songs in Popular Music*, edited by George Plasketes, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 99.

4 From this point on referred to as *just Tears of Longing* without the subtitle

In her book “Tears of Longing” Christine Yano states that, like most musical genres, it is difficult to define enka as a genre. She defends this point of view by pointing out the fact that even the Japanese music industry doesn't define enka by musical or textual context, but instead defines a song sung by enka singer X as enka simply because it is sung by enka singer X.[5]

It is not hard to see that this definition might cause confusion and frustration, as for example the songs of an enka singer which changes genre is still considered enka. Another, more extreme, example is the Japanese boy-band Kanjani Eight who made their first appearance on the Japanese music scene in 2004 with the song “Naniwa Iroha Bushi” (Naniwa Iroha Song[6]). This song combined many of the characteristics of enka with rap. Even the title is a reference to enka in that *naniwa-bushi* is another name for *rōkyoku*, a dramatic, narrative form of music accompanied by *shamisen*, which can be considered as one of the predecessors of enka. The song was labelled as enka by *Oricon*, the largest monitor of music sales in Japan, and reached the number one spot on both their enka and weekly sales chart. The group was therefore labelled as an enka group by Oricon. Although their later singles have all been standard J-pop, they have consequently been labelled as enka by Oricon, and have therefore been included on the company's enka sales chart. (Thus, since the group is labelled as an enka group their songs are all labelled as enka songs even though the songs clearly are not enka.) As an example of this, the group reached the number one spot on Oricon's enka ranking on the sixth of September 2010 with their song “LIFE ~ Me no Mae no Mukō e” (LIFE, Beyond What Is Before My Eyes), a pop-song with no clear enka elements.[7]

Another definition often used in the Japanese music world is that enka is traditional music singing the heart of Japan (or of the Japanese).This definition is often used to distinguish enka from the more popular J-pop.[8]

The fact that enka is considered a traditional Japanese musical genre which sings the heart/soul of Japan makes the genre what Eric Hobsbawn would call an “invented tradition”. The “invented tradition” concept argues that many “traditions which appear or claim to be old

5 Christine R. Yano, *Tears of Longing: Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song,* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 29-30.

6 Naniwa is the former name of the Osaka region of Japan. Iroha is a famous Japanese poem containing each character of the hiragana syllabary exactly one time each, making it a perfect pangram.

7 Oricon Co. Ltd, Oricon weekly enka and kayō ranking 06.09.2010.

8 Wajima Yūsuke, *Tsukurareta “Nihon no Kokoro” Shinwa “Enka” wo Meguru Sengo Taishū Ongakushi,* (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2010), 7.

are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented"[9]. Enka fits into this definition of invented traditions even if it is a musical genre and not a tradition per se. The genre was "invented" during the '50s or '60s, but gives the impression of being much older. Although the genre has its roots in several older Japanese musical genres, and the lyrics of the songs often sound rather conservative or old-fashioned, the genre is, in fact, quite new.

Clearly these definitions are not very accurate. Yano herself seems to prefer a definition based on the second one mentioned above: to define enka as "sentimental ballads with the reputation of singing "the heart/soul of Japan".[10] And this definition does seem fitting. However, the definition is a bit wide, so I will try to list some key musical and textual characteristics of the genre which I believe will more clearly define what the genre I am exploring in this thesis really is.

1.2.1 Musical characteristics

Composers of enka songs usually use the so-called *yona-nuki* scale, both in the minor and in the major, although the minor is more frequently used in the songs composed.[11] This is because minor scales tend to sound more sorrowful than major scales. There has been no agreement on why minor scales sound more sorrowful than major scales. However, a recent study by neuroscientists Daniel Bowling and colleagues at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina suggests that the minor key sounds more sorrowful because it is similar to subdued speech.[12] The yona-nuki scale, whose Japanese name means fourth and seventh removed, is a pentatonic scale with no fourth or seventh degree. The term "degree" here refers to the numerical labels given to the notes in a scale. In other words, removal of the fourth and seventh degree means that the F and B are removed from the major scales, making the natural C-D-E-F-G-A-B scale a C-D-E-G-A pentatonic scale. The minor scales do not use D and G, making the natural A-B-C-D-E-F-G scale a A-B-C-E-F pentatonic scale.[13]

The pentatonic scale is also commonly found in Euro-American music, especially in blues, of which the scales are derived. This seems fitting, as enka also shares many of its lyrical themes with blues music. However, the yona-nuki scale used in enka also shares an

9 Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.
10 Yano, Cover up, 99.
11 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 103.
12 Daniel L. Bowling et. al., "Major and minor music compared to excited and subdued speech" in Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, Vol. 127, Issue 1, (2010), 491, 502.
13 Nishiyama, Yutaka, "The Mathematics of Minor Keys" in International Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics, Vol.67, No.2, (2011), 157.

important characteristic which differentiates it from Euro-American scales, as well as linking it up to traditional Japanese music. Namely, the lack of a seventh degree. This lack of seventh degree is a feature shared by many of the scales used in traditional Japanese music. An enka melody line might therefore bring to mind some of the aspects of traditional Japanese folk songs.[14]

The tempo of the songs in the genre is usually slow to medium, which also helps the sorrow in the music to be more prominent. This is another aspect which makes the enka genre more similar to American blues music.[15]

Enka songs usually utilize mostly Western instruments like the guitar, the violin or horns, although these instruments are sometimes accompanied by traditional Japanese instruments like the *shamisen* or the *koto*. Vocally, however, enka songs are sung by utilizing traditional Japanese vocal techniques and styles, especially *ko-bushi*, which is a vibrato-like ornamentation that can produce an effect which resembles stylized crying; *yuri*, a distinctive "swinging" of the voice, similar to vibrato techniques used in Euro-American music, only slower and broader; as well as other vocal techniques like for instance extra-musical vocalizations such as grunts and growls, which are often used techniques in one of the predecessors of enka, *naniwa-bushi*. This is one of the main factors that make enka songs sound different from other ballad genres.[16]

As can be seen, musically the genre contains elements from both modern Euro-American music as well as elements from traditional Japanese music.

1.2.2 Textual characteristics

The majority of my thesis will focus on exploring enka as a genre based on textual analysis. This section will therefore provide a short introduction to the textual characteristics of the enka genre which will be analysed further in the thesis.

One of the major textual characteristics of enka, as Yano points out in "Tears of Longing", are the clichés. These are the limited sets of key words, phrases and themes which are repeated in every enka song, such as *sake, tears, lingering affection, grudges* and *loneliness*. These clichés are part of what makes enka *enka*, and also play a key part in determining if a song is an enka song or not. These clichés and redundancies are one of the

14 Okada Maki and Gerald Groemer, "Musical Characteristics of Enka" *Popular Music*, Vol. 10, No. 3, Japanese Issue (Oct., 1991), 284-286.
15 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 103.
16 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 43, 103, 111.

reasons for the directness of enka, according to Christine Yano.[17]

Yano further explains that the music of enka is imprinted bodily, meaning that the listeners do not necessarily hear one particular song repeatedly, but overhear a whole corpus of songs with overlapping phases, tonal arrangements, and melodies. The repetitiveness of the genre creates what Bourdieu would call a "musical habitus", a "structured and structuring structure"[18] which bodily imprints a set of musical expectations and familiarities over time. This musical habitus allows the listener to consume the song at a primal level, through direct emotional appeal.[19]

An enka song, like most popular music songs, usually consists of three verses, although exceptions exist as a matter of course. These three verses usually consists of five to eight lines each, and follow the poetic feature of *waka*, a traditional form of Poetry in Japan. Waka consist of lines of five or seven syllables, emotional lyricism expressing beauty and sadness, often through use of images of nature and elements of *nihonjin-ron,* the theory that Japan is culturally and linguistically unique and pure. Yano therefore speculates that enka might be a modern commercial recasting of waka.[20]

1.2.3 Possible subcategories of enka

Linda Fujie speculates in her essay "Popular Music" that it is possible to distinguish several subtypes within the enka genre. She continues to describe four possible subcategories. Summarised these categories are:

1. The type of enka that has been influenced by *naniwa-bushi*, thus the themes of this kind of enka often concern *giri* and *ninjo* (the Japanese values of duty and humanity), as well as heroism and self-sacrifice. Singers of this kind of enka are expected to have a strong, thick voice. The singers' costumes are Japanese kimono. The singers themselves tend to be in their late thirties to fifties and some of the first singers in this category were originally *naniwa-bushi* singers. Representative of this category are the singers Murata Hideo, Minami Haruo, and Futaba Yuriko.
2. Songs that concern life in general. These songs resemble the *naniwa-bushi* type of enka to some degree in the kind of costumes worn, style of vocal production, and voice colour. Themes of this kind of enka often concern *giri* and *ninjo*, the love between brothers and sisters, and the ties between parent and child. The titles of these songs frequently end in *-jingi* (which can be translated as either "moral duty" or "humanity") or *-minato* (port), and masculine names are common in the lyrics. Male

17 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 91.
18 Pierre Bourdieu quoted in: Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 91.
19 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 91.
20 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 92.

and female singers usually wear Japanese clothing. Singers such as Miyako Harumi and Kitajima Saburō often sing songs of this type.

3. Enka that has been influenced by *minyō*, or traditional folk song. The female singers wear Japanese kimono (though not as brightly coloured as those of the above group), and the men wear business suits. Many of the titles of the songs in this category contain names of rural areas. Singers who generally fit into this category include Mihashi Michiya and Kanazawa Akiko.
4. Songs that concern love and loss of love. This is the largest category of enka. In performance, the female singers often wear long dresses and the male singers wear suits. The titles of the songs themselves can contain the names of large cities like Tokyo and Osaka, being more oriented toward the city than the enka in the above category. The lyrics are often about an impossible or a lost love, and the use of images that allude to the emotions of sadness and loneliness is important. Male singers often sing about the feelings of a woman. Typical singers of this kind of enka are Mori Shin'ichi and Yashiro Aki.[21]

Obviously these subcategories are not absolute, and even Fujie herself admits that the boundary lines between these subtypes are flexible, and that singers cross over from one kind of enka to another all the time. However, they do provide a very useful description of different styles of enka and list several different characteristics of the genre as a whole. I will not categorise enka songs into these kinds of categories in this thesis, but will instead treat the categories as different styles of a common enka genre.

The above categorisation, as well as both the musical and the textual patterns which form the characteristics of enka music, make the genre highly standardised. Enka would therefore fit well into Adorno's image of popular music. Adorno sees popular music as something which has been standardised by the capitalist record industry in order to keep production costs down. The result is a type of music which focuses on repetition and is void of originality. His critique of modern popular music can therefore be said to apply to the enka genre as well.[22]

1.2.4 Former version of enka

Another factor one has to consider when defining enka is that there existed another musical genre which was also called enka before the genre currently known as enka developed. This earlier genre originated in the 1880s as songs sung in the streets to protest against the government and in support of the *jiyū minken undō* (freedom and people's rights movement), which sought to establish a democratic constitution and a nationally elected assembly.

21 Fujie. “Popular Music”, 210-211.

22 Theodor Adorno, “On Popular Music” in *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word*, edited by Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin, (London: Routledge, 1990), 256-267.

Although the genre had a small revival during the Second World War, the genre mostly died out around the turn of the century, after the establishment of the Diet and Japan's victory in the First Sino-Japanese War diminished the need for protest songs. Although this genre and the modern genre are both called enka, the two genres can easily be distinguished from each other by musical style and textual content. In addition, the word enka in the protest song version of enka is an abbreviated form of "*enzetsu no uta*" (oratorical song), while the modern spelling of the word enka is derived from the term "*enjiru uta*" (performing song). It is this modern musical genre meaning performing song I will discuss in this thesis.[23]

1.3 The genesis of the word enka

The word *enka* in itself also has an interesting background. Although there exist songs from the fifties and the sixties that are unmistakably enka songs, these songs were not categorized as enka at the time. This is because the term *enka* was not widely used to describe this type of music until the late sixties. Before this, enka was not used as the name of a genre but as part of the word *enkachō* (enka tune) to describe a song with similar characteristics as songs belonging to the enka genre have today. These songs were also usually referred to as *Ryūkōka* (Popular songs) or *Kayōkyoku* (Ballad songs) at this point in time.[24] However, according to Carolyn Stevens, the later form was used more than the former as the term *Ryūkōka* started to fade from use from the mid-1920s. This is shown by the fact that NHK, the national broadcasting company in Japan, started to use *Kayōkyoku* over *Ryūkōka* by the late 1920s. The use of the term *Ryūkōka* did, however, experience a short revival in the immediate postwar era.[25]

The *Kayōkyoku* songs which are now categorized as enka, were often considered as part of the Japanese Blues genre or as *Mūdo-Kayō* (Mood-ballads), a sub-genre of the *Kayōkyoku* genre. The *Mūdo-Kayō* sub-genre consists of ballad songs with medium-to-slow tempo about failed romance, a theme often found in enka songs today. *Mūdo-Kayō* also features Western instruments which is also common in today's enka music.[26]

As stated above, the term *enka* was not widely in use until the late sixties even though

23 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 31-32.
24 Wajima, *Tsukurareta "Nihon no Kokoro"*, 220.
25 Carolyn S. Stevens, *Japanese Popular Music: Culture, authenticity, and Power*, (London: Routledge, 2008), 15.
26 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 41.

songs which unmistakably are enka songs were released before that point in time. In the sixties, the Japanese record industry needed a way to differentiate the more traditional Japanese sounding music from the largely American-influenced music, which was becoming popular after American music flooded the nation in the period after the Second World War. The Japanese record industry therefore adapted the term *enka* to refer to this more traditional sounding Japanese music. Although the term was in use before 1969, the term *enka* became popularised in this year mostly as a result of Nippon Victor's use of the term to advertise the singer Fuji Keiko, who made her début in September of that year.[27]

Nippon Crown also helped popularise the term *enka* by labelling all music released by the company using the yona-nuki scales and *yuri* techniques as enka. Nippon Crown was started in 1963 and was the publisher of many popular enka singers at the time, such as Kitajima Saburō and Kobayashi Akira.[28]

According to Stevens, there is another reason why the record companies needed this new enka genre. The reason is that since all popular music was called *Kayōkyoku* at the time, the original meaning of the term was becoming diluted. Enka therefore arose in reaction to, and as an antidote to, the more modern, Euro-American inspired Japanese popular music, even though enka itself relies partly on a Euro-American musical background as described earlier in this chapter.[29]

1.3.1 Different ways to write the word *enka* in Japanese

It is also worth mentioning that there exist several ways to write the word *enka* in Japanese. Presently, *演歌* is the normal way to write the word, which, as stated earlier in this chapter, means performance song. However, when Nippon Crown started using the term in the early sixties, they used the characters for erotic song, *艶歌*, which obviously has strong sexual connotations. This way of writing the word was also used by the author Itsuki Hiroyuki in his novel *enka*, which was largely based on the life of musical director Mabuchi Genzō, one of the founders of Nippon Crown.[30]

However, this way of writing the word was censored and changed to the more neutral way of writing it. Other ways of writing *enka* includes 怨歌, which means grudge song. This

27 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 41.
28 Wajima, *Tsukurareta "Nihon no Kokoro"*, 220-223.
29 Stevens, *Japanese Popular Music*, 45.
30 Wajima, *Tsukurareta "Nihon no Kokoro"*, 221.

way of writing was often used to categorize enka songs about ill-will, malice and regret. However, already in 1969, as shown in the aforementioned advertisement campaign to promote Fuji Keiko, the now standard way of writing the word to mean performance song had become the norm.[31] Another factor which led to *演歌* becoming the usual way to write the word is the fact that the character *艶* was not part of the government's list of characters used in everyday life, *艶歌* therefore soon disappeared as an alternative way to write the word *enka*, especially in newspapers and magazines.[32]

1.4 A historical overview of modern enka

The musical genre which today is known as enka developed from several older musical genres. Some of these genres, which have already been mentioned in this thesis, include *minyō* and *naniwa-bushi*, as well as blues. Another genre which influenced modern day enka is *nagashi,* although *nagashi* cannot really be said to be a genre since it is regarded more as a description of travelling musicians playing *enkachō* songs in the streets or in bars than a genre.[33]

The person who can be said to be "the father of modern enka"[34] is the composer Koga Masao. His songs feature many of the elements which today are associated with enka music. This includes a slow tempo, the yona-nuki scale, dark lyrics and western instruments such as the guitar or the mandolin. His musical style is codified and known as "Koga merodii" (Koga melody). Even though he started composing in the 1930s, long before enka became its own genre, several of the songs analysed in this thesis are composed by Koga, including "Jinsei Gekijō" and "Kanashii Sake".[35]

The "Koga merodii" style of *kayōkyoku* started to develop into what is today known as enka during the 1950s, although at the time the word enka was not used to describe this kind of songs. The year which can be said to be the first year modern enka songs were released is 1955, with the release of "Onna-sendō Uta" (Boatwoman's song) by Mihashi Michiya and "Wakare no Ippon Sugi" (Lone Cedar of Farewell) by Kasuga Hachirō. Both artists had

31 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 41.
32 Wajima, *Tsukurareta "Nihon no Kokoro"*, 168-169
33 Wajima, *Tsukurareta "Nihon no Kokoro"*, 103.
34 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 36.
35 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 36-37.

released other songs before this, but Mihashi's earlier songs can be classified as belonging to the *minyō* genre, and Kasuga's songs can be characterised as standard *kayōkyoku* songs. Mihashi and Kasuga have been said to have established the enka genre, together with Murata Hideo, who made his début a few years later. They all continued to release popular enka songs for several years after making their débuts as enka singers.[36]

The popularity of the enka genre reached its peak during the period between the late '60s and the late 80's. Nearly all of the enka songs which have reached the top position on the Japanese Oricon chart were released in this twenty year period. Fuji Keiko's début album was also released during this period. In 1970, her album became the record with the most consecutive number one positions, a record the album still holds.[37] The second best-selling single of all time in Japan, Pin Kara Torio's "Onna no Michi" was also released during this period, in 1972.[38] The popularity of enka songs during this period can also be demonstrated by the fact that 53 percent of all Japanese named enka as their favourite genre in 1971.[39]

Although the genre had some best-sellers during the 1980s, the popularity of enka started to decrease during the last few years of the 1970s. In 1978, the percentage of people who named enka as their favourite genre had shrunk to 31 percent. Although this percentage is quite high, it is still a severe decrease from the 53 percent recorded seven years earlier.[40] The more Euro-American inspired J-pop genre also became more popular among the younger listeners during the 1980s. Something which led to both a decrease in the sale of songs in the *kayōkyoku* genre and in the enka genre. *Kayōkyoku*, like enka, was now viewed as a genre which only appealed to the older demographics. This led the separation between enka and *kayōkyoku* to somewhat fade. This is evident in the fact that during the 1990s Oricon started to characterise all music that sounded old-fashioned and was targeted towards an older audience with a combined *enka/kayōkyoku* label.[41]

The genre reached its low point during the 1990s. The number of radio shows and televisions shows featuring enka songs had been in a steady decline since the 1970s, and some

36 NTV, *Enka Kashu Kasuga Hachirō ga Naku Natta Hi*, 22.10.1999. http://www.ntv.co.jp/omoii-tv/today/081022.html (20.10.2011)
37 Asahi Shimbun, *Orikon no Arubamu Ichi I ga Sen Sakuhin ni: Saita wa Yūmin,* 19.09.2007. http://www.asahi.com/komimi/TKY200709190117.html (20.10.2011)
38 Oricon Co. Ltd., *SMAP "Sekai ni Hitotsu Dake no Hana", Shinguru Uriage Rekidai Kyū-i ni!!*, 03.08.2004. http://www.oricon.co.jp/news/ranking/5139/ (20.10.2011)
39 Masui Keiji, *Dēta, Ongaku, Nippon: Furoku, Nihon Yōgakushi: Mieji Shoki no Kiroku,* (Tokyo: Min'on Ongaku Shiryōkan, 1980), 166.
40 Masui, *Dēta, Ongaku, Nippon*, 169.
41 Wajima, *Tsukurareta "Nihon no Kokoro"*, 318-319.

even suggest that the quality of the songs themselves had declined, although this can be regarded as subjective statements.[42] Yet, even though the popularity of the genre declined during the 1990s, Yano states that enka was not disappearing, it had rather become part of a more segmented market, a trend which started during the '70s.[43] During the 1990s, the sales of enka music dropped to nearly three percent of total record sales.[44] When comparing this to the early '70s when the best selling singles and albums were all made by enka artists, it becomes clear that the genre's popularity did in fact decrease and enka had become part of a segmented market.

Enka seems to have increased in popularity during the 2000s compared to the low point of the 1990s. The genre's market share increased from nearly three percent in the late 1990s to twelve percent in 2008.[45] This can be attributed to several younger enka singers making their début during the 2000s. The previously discussed “Naniwa Iroha Bushi”, was the first songs characterised as enka by Oricon to make it to the number one position on the Oricon chart since the late 1980s. Hikawa Kiyoshi also made his début at the start of the decade. Hikawa soon became popular, and his single “Hatsukoi Ressha” (First Love Train) reached the number one position on the Oricon chart in 2005.[46]

The decade also saw the début of the first black enka singer, the African American artist Jero. His début single “Umi Yuki” (Sea Snow) was released in 2008 and quickly reached the fourth position on the weekly Oricon single chart, as well as holding the peak position on the weekly enka chart for twelve consecutive weeks. Jero performs in a hip-hop attire and the music video for the song “Umi Yuki” features hip-hop dancing. This has attracted a younger audience and Jero himself wishes to act as a bridge between enka and the younger demographic which are not fan of enka music.[47]

1.5 Sources and previous research in the field of enka

There seems to exist very little material written on the subject of enka. The only major

42 Arita Yoshio quoted in: Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 44.
43 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 44.
44 Alex Martin, *“Enka” Still Strikes Nostalgic Nerve*, The Japan Times, 18.11.2008. http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20081118i1.html (08.11.2011).
45 Martin, *“Enka” Still Strikes Nostalgic Nerve*.
46 Hayashi Tatsuo, “Enka Saikō: Hikawa Kiyoshi no Shutsugen”, *The Sapporo University Journal,* Vol.18(31.10.2004), 23.
47 Kiuchi Yuya, “An Alternative African American Image in Japan: Jero as the Cross-Generational Bridge between Japan and the United States” *Journal of Popular Culture* v. 42 no. 3 (June 2009), 524.

research conducted on the subject in English is by Christine R. Yano. Yano's research is detailed in her book “Tears of Longing”. In addition to “Tears of Longing”, Yano has also written some articles about enka which have been published in various journals and collections. However, these articles are largely based on the same research she conducted for the above mentioned book, and are typically a summarized version or an expansion of certain aspects of the research conducted on enka for “Tears of Longing”.

Yano has conducted extensive research on enka, and she has also detailed the themes and patterns of the genre extensively. However, Yano chose to mainly concentrate on enka songs which were popular during the period she conducted her research, which was during the late '80s and early '90s. So although Yano's analysis of the genre is very detailed, she has not tried to explore the changes which have occurred in the genre over its lifespan, something I will try to explore in this thesis. However, I will compare her findings with my own findings, and use her analysis of the clichés of enka as reference and as a point of departure.

In addition to Yano's work on the subject, there is a book by the Japanese scholar Wajima Yūsuke called “Tsukurareta ‘Nihon no Kokoro’ shinwa: *‘enka’ wo meguru sengo taishū ongakushi*” (The constructed myth of the “heart of Japan”: postwar popular music history surrounding “enka”), which will also be useful for this thesis. In “The constructed myth of the ‘heart of Japan’”, Wajima explores the evolution of Japanese music in postwar Japan, centring on enka. And although Wajima's work does not define the characteristics of the genre in as much detail as Yano does in “Tears of Longing”, it does do a good job of explaining how the genre has changed along with the rest of the musical scene in Japan during the postwar era. The book also explores many of the genres which are said to have evolved into, or at the very least, have served as an inspiration for, enka. However, even though Wajima divulges deeply into the topic of changes in and surrounding enka, he never discusses any possible changes occurring in the content of the songs. “The constructed myth of the ‘heart of Japan’” also details some aspects of enka music which Yano omits in “Tears of Longing”. This includes a more detailed exploration of the history of enka before it became a genre, as well as a description of newer trends in the genre which started after “Tears of Longing” was published. Wajima also writes about how certain songs were received when they were released as well as the circumstances surrounding these releases. The book also contains a major discussion on whether enka can be said to sing the “heart/soul of Japan”, without coming to any conclusion on the matter.

Mita Munesuke has also written extensively on popular songs as psychological data which have been translated into English and collected in a book entitled: “Social Psychology of Modern Japan”. For this major work Mita analysed about 500 popular songs from the start of the Meiji era until 1963 and categorized them into 25 emotional categories. Mita then analysed the songs in each category chronological. Although my focus is on enka produced from 1955 up until today, his work can, like Yano's, be used as reference as well as a point of departure.

Mita's goal was to study the development of the emotions of the Japanese people through their expression in popular music. Although this is somewhat far from what I am doing in this thesis, his work can be used to show the background of the music which developed into enka. In addition, some of the categories, like tears, nostalgia, loneliness and lingering affection, are today some of the major themes in enka songs. Mita's work can in this regard be used as a comparison between the emotions expressed in the historical popular music described in “Social Psychology of Modern Japan” and the emotions expressed in today's enka. Mita has also written extensively on the social psychology of the modernized Japan, and the changing mentality of the Japanese people. This research can be useful for the analysis of the emotions displayed in enka songs, as well as for comparing changes in lyrics with changes in the Japanese society as a whole.

Chapter II: Analysis of common themes and keywords

As noted in the introduction, enka is a musical genre with seemingly static characteristics. The object of this thesis will therefore be to analyse the lyrics of a selection of 110 popular enka songs ranging from songs released in the mid-fifties to songs released in 2010. These 110 songs are separated into 10 songs per half-decade. This will give me a suitable selection of songs for the purpose of exploring any textual changes that might have occurred in enka songs over the last 55 years. I will also explore how or if there have been any thematic and textual changes in the genre over that period of time.

Before I start exploring thematic and textual changes I will first introduce the themes most often found in enka songs, and discuss them. These themes will form the basis of chapter III.

2.1 Important keywords in enka music

Enka is often criticised as being filled with clichés, a fact which even Christine Yano acknowledges in her book "Tears of Longing".[48] However, these clichés, or keywords, can be used and analysed in order to explore what the common themes in enka songs are. The keywords can also be used to explore how, or even if, enka lyrics have changed over the years.

In this chapter I will discuss the themes most frequently found in enka songs. Similar studies have been conducted by Christine Yano on enka,[49] and by Mita Munesuke on Japanese popular music in general.[50] However, I expect to find differences between these two studies and my own. Mita's study focuses on Japanese popular songs from 1868 to 1963, which means that enka songs are only a small fraction of Mita's research material. Yano's study pertains to enka, but mostly includes songs released in the late '80s and early '90s.[51] Yano's result will therefore most likely be different from mine, if one assumes that the emotional themes in enka songs changes over time. However, I will compare my findings with those of

48 e.g. Chapter 5 of "Tears of Longing" is named "Clichés of Excess".
49 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 92-103.
50 Mita Munesuke, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, translated by Stephen Suloway, (London: Kegan Paul International, 1992), 1-137.
51 By my account, more than 75% of the songs Yano's corpus were released in the period between 1985 and 1993. For reference, see list of songs in: Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 193-201.

Yano and Mita to see if I get similar results. If I do get any different results, I will try to explore these differences in chapter III.

2.1.1 My keywords

Following is a figure of keywords appearing in 19 or more of the songs in the corpus (17.3% of the song selection).

Figure 2.1 Word frequency in song texts

Word	English Translation	Number of Songs	Number of Occurrences
naku	to cry	56	83
namida	tears	49	63
kokoro	heart/soul	48	67
yume	dream	47	68
hito	person[52]	47	80
anata	you[53]	44	126
onna	woman	39	84
koi	love	36	60
hitori	alone	33	49
hana	flower	32	56
yoru	night	32	63
kaze	wind	31	46
otoko	man	30	52
watashi/atashi	I/me[54]	28	52
futari	couple	28	48
mune	chest	27	29
sake	alcohol/sake[55]	26	76
ame	rain	26	43
wakareru	to separate	26	32
fune	boat	25	40
ashita	tomorrow	24	28
kaeru	return	21	41
kanashii	sad	20	23
ore	I/me[56]	20	35
shiawase	happiness	19	27
miren	lingering affection	19	25

52 This word is often used to refer to a woman.
53 Used when referring to someone close to you, also takes the meaning of "dear" when spoken by a wife to her husband.
54 *Atashi* is used strictly by women.
55 The word *sake* is used to mean Japanese rice wine in the West.
56 More masculine than *Watashi*.

2.2 The popularity of tears in enka music

The first thing one notices when looking at the figure displayed above is that the two keywords which appear in the largest number of enka songs both refer to weeping. The two words are *naku* and *namida*, meaning to cry and tears respectively. The fact that both of these words are in the top of this ranking suggests that tears are the most frequently used motif in enka songs. Alan Tansman even calls tears "The greatest of [enka's] clichés."[57]

Namida is also the most frequently used noun in Mita's study of popular Japanese music[58]. The fact that tears and crying are the most frequently used keywords in enka songs might therefore not make the genre unique in the history of popular music in Japan. However, the noun *tears* only appear in just under 20% of the 451 songs in Mita's corpus, while in my selection of enka songs, the noun is used in nearly 45% of the songs. It is, however, noteworthy that songs which included the noun *tears* was nearly non-existent in the years after the Meiji Restoration up until the early 20th century. However, after the turn of the century the popularity of the noun in songs greatly rose, and in the years after the Second World War *namida* occurred in over 35% of the songs in Mita's selection, which includes some enka songs.[59]

In Christine Yano's study, the word *namida* is only ranked as fifth among the words occurring in the largest number of songs. However, although the word tears is only ranked as number five, the percentage of songs which included the word is just above 45% among Yano's selection of songs, which is very close to the percentage I found in my selection of songs, it is even a bit higher.[60]

The only word which is used in a larger number of songs than *namida* in my selection of songs is *naku*, which is the verb used to describe the act of shedding tears. This verb occurs in 56 of 110 songs, i.e. just above half of the songs. In Yano's study, the percentage of songs which include the verb *naku* is slightly lower at 39%, or 45 of 115 songs. The two words *naku* and *namida* do not always appear together in songs either. The number of songs in my selection which includes tears and/or crying is 82, or nearly three quarters of the songs. This number is quite high in Yano's study too, with 75 of 115 songs, or 62% of her selection of

57 Alan Tansman, "Misora Hibari", in *The Human Tradition in Modern Japan,* edited by Anne Walthall, (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 2002), 219.
58 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 31.
59 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 31.
60 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 94.

songs. It is therefore clear why Tansman calls this the greatest of enka's clichés.[61]

2.2.1 Other keywords connected to weeping

In addition to tears and crying in itself, other keywords can be a metaphor or linked to crying and/or tears. One of these keywords, which is ranked as number 18 of words which occur in the largest number of songs, is *ame*, rain. Linking tears to rain is also common in Western poetry and song lyrics. Popular examples of this linkage are the act of crying in the rain, as well as the song by the same name made famous by The Everly Brothers. Linking tears to rain is also common in enka songs, as demonstrated in Fuji Keiko's song "Inochi Azukemasu" (I Put My Life In Your Hands), released in 1970.

Ame no furu yoru wa ame ni naki
Kaze no fuku hi wa kaze ni naki

Or translated:

On a rainy night I cry in the rain
On a windy day I cry in the wind

The crying in the rain motif is used in this song. However, the more interesting aspect about this excerpt is the fact that her sadness is so great that she does not just cry through the rainy night, she also continues to cry during the windy day that follows. This action implies that tears can be linked to more weather types than just rain in enka songs. This seems to be especially true with wind, which seemingly has the very human-like ability to weep in enka songs. Following are a few examples:

Hosokawa Takashi: "Yagiri no Watashi" (Yagiri Ferry) (1983):

Kita kaze ga naite fuku

The north wind blows weeping

Mizumori Kaori: "Hitori Satsuma-ro" (Lonesome Satsuma Route) (2007):

Higure Kagoshima Sakurajima
Anata koishi to kaze ga naku

The sun sets in Sakurajima in Kagoshima
The wind wails I long for you

61 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 94, 98.

In these songs the wind is not only linked to the act of crying, but the crying itself is not conducted by the singer. It is instead conceived by the singer as being the manner the wind is blowing, perhaps reflecting the singers' own sadness and the longing for their lost love.

The wind can weep, but so can other objects and life forms in enka music. This is because the word *naku* in Japanese can have several different meanings depending on which ideograph one uses to write the word. *Naku*, in addition to meaning to cry, can also mean call (of a bird or an animal), or the adverbial or the continuative form of the adjective *naku*, which means non-existent or not exist. These kinds of synonyms are used as a narrative device in some enka songs, like for example Sen Masao's "Bōkyō Sakaba" (Homesick Bar), released in 1981:

Kaze ni chigirete yo~ noren no suso wo
Kisha ga hito naki kita e iku

The hem of the shop's curtain has been torn off by the wind
The train is going north without people

I have translated "hito naki" to mean without people, as in there are no people on the train, since I assume that is how people are going to hear the line when they hear it for the first time. However, this isn't the only way this sentence can be interpreted. the sentence can alternatively be translated to "the train is going to the depopulated north". However, in the lyrics the word *naki* is written with ideograph for weeping. Based on this information, the lyrics the second line can be translated to: "The train is going north with people crying". In addition, since the word "hito" is written using the syllabic hiragana writing system, the line can also be translated to: "With one cry of the whistle the train is going north". One might be tempted to disregard this as an erratum, however, this way of writing the sentence is consistently used in all versions of the lyrics for this song I have found, as well as in the karaoke version and in the subtitles of television performances of this song.

Rain can, in addition to being linked with crying, be a metaphor for crying in itself in enka lyrics, as shown in the song "Koi Uta Tsuzuri" (Love Song Spelling) by Horiuchi Takao, from 1990.

Mado ni shigure no kono ame wa
Asu mo furu no ka hareru no ka
Sore tomo namida ga kareru made

Makura nurashite kazoe uta

This rain drizzling on the window
Will it rain tomorrow too or will it clear up
Or until my tears dry
Soaking my pillow, counting song[62]

In this song the rain starts out as being actual physical rain drizzling on the window. However, it soon gets mingled with tears, the question if it will still rain tomorrow can therefore also be interpreted as the protagonist questioning herself whether she will still cry the next day or not. Another example of rain manifesting itself as tears can be found in the song "Ajisai-bashi" (Hydrangea[63] Bridge) by Jōnouchi Sanae, released in 1986.

Ame no tsubu itsu no ma ni ka
Namida ni natta

Without noticing the drops of rain
Turned into tears

As in "Koi Uta Tsuzuri", the rain and the tears have become mingled in "Ajisai-bashi" as well.

Tears are also often connected to another frequently occurring keyword in enka songs, *sake* (alcohol). Examples of this connection include Misora Hibari's "Kanashii Sake" (Sorrowful Sake) released in 1966:

Yoeba kanashiku naru sake wo
Nonde naku no mo koi no tame

Both the sake which makes me sad,
And the weeping is because of love

In "Kanashii Sake", the protagonist has turned to both drinking and weeping as a result of love, most likely a lost love, and the tears and alcohol have become intertwined. This interesting mixture of alcohol, the symbol of loneliness[64], and tears, the symbol of sadness[65], makes the loneliness even greater, and the sorrow even more intense.

62 The phrase "counting song" in this song does not refer to the children counting songs, like for example "99 Bottles of Beer". Instead it is set to mean the enumerative form of waka, which, as stated in chapter 1.2.2, is an important element in enka music. The phrase might have been added to the song in order to make it fit the waka format, while at the same time referring to the waka style in itself.
63 Hydrangea is a genus of flowering plants native to southern and eastern Asia.
64 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 134.
65 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 98.

2.2.2 Tears and gender

Christine Yano notes in her book "Tears of Longing" that there are slight differences between the genders concerning tears and crying in enka songs. One of the differences is that women cry more often than men. In Yano's study, in which she classified her selection of songs into male or female, in addition to duets and ambiguous songs, Yano found that while only 45% of the men's songs included references to crying, 70% of the women's songs included references to tears and/or crying.[66] The occurrence of tears and crying is higher among my selection of songs, the difference between how many men's songs and women's songs refer to crying is also smaller, although the disparity is still present in my corpus. I found that 83 percent of the women's songs include *naku* or *namida*, while 75 percent of the men's songs refer to crying or tears. Women therefore cry more often than men in my selection of songs as well, although the difference is only minor.

Furthermore, Yano also states that there are differences between how men and women cry. She gives examples of some of these differences by citing songs about crying, I have used one of these examples below, with Yano's translation, since the song was also included in my corpus of songs. The rest are all from my corpus, showing that Yano's analysis of the reasons men cry in enka songs align with my own findings.[67]

Kitajima Saburō: "Matsuri" (Festival) (1984):

> *... Namida to ase koso*
> *Otoko no roman*
>
> … The life of a man is one
> of sweat and tears.[68]

Okada Daisaku: "Mushaku Ryojō" (Wuxi[69] Travelling Mood) (1986):

> *Kimi no shiranai ikoku no machi de*
> *Kimi wo omoeba nakete kuru*
>
> In a foreign town unknown to you
> Just by thinking about you I start crying

66 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 98.
67 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 98.
68 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 98.
69 Wuxi is the name of an old Chinese city, its Japanese name is Mushaku.

Itsuki Hiroshi: “Omae to Futari” (Together With You) (1979):

Aa nakijakuru hito
Mukashi no koto wa wasurero yo

Oh sobbing person
Forget these old matters

Ishihara Yūjirō: “Kita no Tabi-bito” (Northern traveller) (1987):

Nakiguse sakeguse namidaguse
Doko e satta ka hosoi kage

Weeping habit, drinking habit, a habit of tearing up
To where did you leave me, thin shadow

Men's tears are part of the struggle of life and intermingle with sweat, but men also cry over lost love and lingering affection, or sometimes even the thought of never seeing their loved one again. However, most importantly they cry with a longing and a yearning, both for their loved ones far away, but also for their home town, where they grew up.[70]

Women on the other hand do not seem to cry over life's path or their home towns. Women usually cry over men. They cry endlessly and their tears are shed because of broken hearts, private affairs and failed romances:[71]

Itsuki Hiroshi: “Yokohama, Tasogare” (Yokohama, Twilight) (1971):

Burūsu kuchibue onna no namida
Ano hito wa itte itte shimatta

Blues, whistling melodies, a woman's tears
He has gone away, completely gone away

Yoshi Ikuzo: “Yukiguni” (Snow Country) (1986):

Aitakute yogisha noru dekki no mado ni
Tomedonaku hō tsutau namida no ato wo

I want to see you, so I ride the night train, looking out the window
The traces of ceaseless tears running down my cheeks

Yashiro Aki: “Onna no Yume” (The Dreams of a Woman) (1975):

Yoru no keshō ni namida wo kakushi

70 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 98.
71 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 99.

Isshō ichido no koi ni naku

Hiding my tears in the make-up of the night
Crying over a once in a lifetime love

Mizumori Kaori: "Hitori Satsuma-ro" (Lonesome Satsuma route) (2007):

Anata wo wasureru tabi na no ni
Itsu made miren ni naku no deshō ka

Travelling to forget you, and yet
How long will I weep over lingering affection

What both women and men have in common in enka songs is that crying is seen as something natural and outside of human control. Neither men nor women try to hold back their tears. In the song "Mina no Shū", the singer actually tells the listeners that they should cry when they are feeling sorrowful since faking a smile when one is sad is not good for one's health. Yano speculates that in theory, tears do not spring from the social face, but spring from the heart, which does the actual crying. Tears also have the function of being *honne* (private feelings) to the *tatemae* (public face) of a smile. The protagonist therefore usually cries alone.[72]

The high usage of the noun *tears* is not unique to the enka genre. However, the fact that nearly half of the songs in my corpus include the word *namida* causes one to conclude that the notion of tears and crying is one of the major themes in enka music, as well as an important and easily recognisable way to express the sorrow, yearning and loneliness which are present in many enka songs.

2.3 Other Keywords

2.3.1 Kokoro

The word which occurs third most frequently in enka songs, after *naku* and *namida*, is *kokoro,* which means heart. This Japanese word for heart holds, like its English equivalent, more meaning than just the literal meaning: a muscular organ which pumps blood through the body. In the Japanese language *kokoro* connotes the meaning of one's heart, mind and soul as well as one's feelings and emotions. I have chosen to translate the Japanese word *kokoro* to heart/soul in figure 2.1 to reflect the many different meanings of the word.

In my selection of songs, the word *kokoro* occurs in 48 of 110 songs, nearly as often

72 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 100.

as *namida*. In Yano's study the word was the second most frequently used word and occurred in almost half of her selection of songs.[73]

Another word related to *kokoro* which occurs frequently in enka songs is *mune*, which means chest. The chest is the physical seat of the heart, singers are therefore often referring to the heart itself when they are singing about the chest. An example of this can be found in Misora Hibari's song "Kanashii Sake" (sorrowful sake):

Sake yo kokoro ga aru naraba
Mune no nayami wo keshite kure

Alcohol, if you have a heart,
Please extinguish the agony in my chest

In this song the word *chest* symbolises the protagonist's heart. The word *kokoro* is used in the example above as well. In this example the word *kokoro* means feeling, as in: "if you have any feelings at all". Interestingly Misora is talking to her alcohol as if it was a living person, which is a surprisingly often utilized narrative device in enka songs.

The use of the word *heart* to connote one's feelings and emotion is, like tears, not unique to the enka genre or even to Japanese music in general. It is a common motif found in most languages and music genres. The word *heartache*, for example, is a commonly used motif in Euro-American music.

2.3.2 Dreams

The keyword which occurs in the fourth highest number of songs is *yume*, the Japanese word for dreams. The noun *yume* appears in more than 40% of the songs in my corpus. Dreams are an important part of the world of enka, a point proven by the fact that *yume* is the word which occurs in the largest number of songs in Yano's study.[74] However, the importance of dreaming is not specific to the enka genre, it has also historically held great significance in Japanese popular music in general. In Mita's study *yume* is the noun with the second highest frequency of occurrence after *namida.*[75]

Dreams dwell on past loves, mothers, and on one's home town in enka songs according to Yano. The dreams do not encourage the dreamers to take action, resulting in them reuniting with past love, or making a visit to their mother in their old home towns. Instead they

73 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 94.
74 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 94.
75 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 31.

encapsulate the dreamers in a state of resignation and inaction. The dream hence becomes a state of being cut away from the world and the everyday hardship of life.[76]

However, there are positive aspects to dreaming. In the everyday life of the dreamer opportunities are limited. However, in their dreams the possibilities become limitless. Dreams therefore give life meaning and make the hardship endurable, without them life would seem bleak and pointless. In one's dreams life gains meaning and shape, and the dreams carry the dreamer out of the past and into the future.[77]

This positive view of dreams was especially evident during the 1960s, which can be described as a period of tranquillity in Japanese history. The rapid economic growth the country experienced during this time meant the dreams came true for a large number of Japanese citizens.[78] This feeling of tranquillity seems to be reflected in some of the popular enka songs released during the decade as well. Amongst the songs in my corpus released during this period, there are several songs which carry a positive image of dreams. One of these songs is called “Wakai Futari” (Young couple), it is performed by Kitahara Kenji and was released in 1962:

Kimi ni wa kimi no yume ga ari
Boku ni wa boku no yume ga aru
Futari no yume wo yoseaeba
Soyokaze amai haru no oka

You have your dreams
And I have mine
If we add our dreams together
Gentle breeze, mound of sweet spring

The melody of this song is also unusually cheerful, which, along with its positive lyrics, might have been the reason why it became so popular. However, since the majority of enka songs with a positive view on dreams were released during this period of tranquillity, it should be considered as an exception to the way dreams are usually portrayed in enka song rather than as a developing trend.

In conclusion, dreams can bring the dreamer back to the past, dwelling on past love and their home towns. But it can also make the dreamer move from dwelling on the past to focusing on the future. Following are one example each of these two aspects of dreams in

76 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 94-95.
77 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 94-95.
78 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 518-522.

enka:

Mori Shin'ichi: “Bōkyō” (Homesick) (1970):

Watashi hitori wo matte iru
Namida no furusato yume ni yume ni ukabu kara

I am waiting alone
Because the home town of tears rise to the surface in my dreams, in my dreams

Nagayama Yōko: “Tategami” (Mane) (1996):

Sora wo kaketobu raion ni nari
Yume wo tsukande futari no mirai

Becoming a lion taking a running leap towards the sky
Catching the dream, the future of a couple

As one can see, in the first song the protagonist is lonesome and lamenting on her home town, however, this lamenting does not lead to any action, just more sorrow. In the second song, on the other hand, the dreams of the protagonist are what will push her into a future together with the person she loves.

2.3.3 Love

Like in most genres of popular music, love is a popular theme in Japanese enka music. The two most commonly used words to express love in enka songs are *koi* and *ai*. These two words both mean love in Japanese, although with slightly different connotations. *Koi* generally means a physical or sexual attraction to someone, while *ai* carries a broader meaning of love. This includes the love of a mother or father, a brother or sister, as well as the love of a partner. One can also say that *koi* is more temporal, like a crush or an affair, while *ai* connotes feelings of deeper love, like affection. This difference is showcased in the fact that the verb *aisuru* means to love, while *koisuru* means to fall in love. There are also several other linguistic differences in meaning and use of *koi* and *ai* in the Japanese language.[79]

The interesting thing to note here is that there is a much higher frequency of the temporal *koi* in my list of songs than the more permanent *ai*. *Koi* is the eight most frequently used word in my selection of songs. The word occurs in 36 of the 110 songs, or almost a third of the songs in the corpus. *Ai,* on the other hand, only occurs in 16 out of the 110 songs, or

79 Fukuyasu Katsunori. *Koi to Ai Kara no Gengogaku ~ Kotoba no Jūbako no Sumi,* (Tokyo: Asahi Publishing, 1995), 1-8.

just under 15%. Similarly, in Yano's study, *koi* is the ninth most frequently used word, while *ai* is not even among her list of the 24 most frequently used words in her selection of songs.[80]

The reason why the temporal *koi* occurs more frequently than the permanent *ai* might be related to the way romance is viewed in the lyrics of enka songs: as brief and floating. Everlasting romance is seen as the stuff of dreams, fantasy and illusion, and the wish for one might be ridiculed by someone else or even by the protagonists themselves.[81] An example of the latter can be found in the song "Yukiguni" (Snow Country) by Yoshi Ikuzo from 1986:

Baka ne baka na onna ne
Iji wo hatteta atashi

Foolish, huh? I was a foolish woman, wasn't I?
I was foolishly stubborn[82]

In "Yukiguni" it first seems like the singer Yoshi Ikuzo, a male singer, is referring to someone else when he asks if the person in question was a foolish woman. However it becomes clear from the second line of the excerpt that the woman he is singing about is actually he himself. The fact that the male singer of this song is singing from a female perspective is actually not as unusual as it may seem. This kind of gender-crossing is not that uncommon in enka, a fact which will be discussed in the last section of this chapter (named: "The crossing of gender lines in enka"). Nevertheless, even if it might be the object of ridicule in certain songs, the evanescence of a brief romance is viewed as something aesthetic in the same way as the evanescence of a beautiful flower is viewed as more precious because it is perishable.[83]

There are also differences in how men and women love. Men love actively and passionately, but a man's love is abrupt. Women, on the other hand, love passively, pleadingly, and they give all they have. Love is also seen as destined to be, but so is the heartbreak which usually follows in enka songs.[84]

This heartbreak can sometimes turn into grudge in women's songs, although it rarely does. One example of heartbreak turning into resentment can be found in the song "Kanashii Sake" (Sorrowful Sake) by Misora Hibari, released in 1966:

Naite urande yoru ga fukeru

80 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 94.
81 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 162.
82 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 149.
83 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 162-163.
84 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 163-165.

As I cry bearing a grudge the night advances

In essayist Itsuki Hiroyuki's critic of enka singer Fuji Keiko's first album, Itsuki found grudge to be such a central motif in Fuji's songs that the genre of songs she sung should be called "grudge songs", pronounced enka, but written with the ideograph meaning grudge instead of performance.[85]

Suffering caused by heartbreak is an essential part of many enka songs, it seals a pact between the singer and the audience, and between listeners. Yano states that "in enka, the kata[86] of romance is framed as a negotiation between desire and duty, between the individual and the group, and between the nation and the heart."[87] This indicates that the type of romance that exists in enka songs constructs nationhood. It is a nationhood in affirmation of what is considered right about traditional Japan: warmth, loyalty and duty, while negating what is wrong with modern Japan. It is a nationhood built on suffering and duty, not only in romance, but in society as a whole.[88]

Songs with a motif of affectionate, yearning love has gained popularity in Japan since the start of the twentieth century. This trend has been continued by the genre since its beginnings and it has become an important part of enka music. *Boyō,* which is the Japanese term for this type of affectionate longing, is mostly connected to *koi,* as it is not the kind of love a parent feels towards a child, nor is it an emotion one feels towards a possible long-term partner. *Boyō* is mainly expressed in enka songs in one of two ways, either as the love for a place which is far away, like one's birthplace, or love of a person who one is separated from due to status or class distinctions.[89] An example of this type of love can be found in the song "Aishu Ressha" (Train of Sorrow) by Mihashi Michiya, released in 1956.

Mado wa futari wo tōku suru
Korae kirezu ni mikaereba

The window separating us, so far away
I can't bear it any longer, looking back[90]

Boyō naturally connects love to two other important motif often found in enka songs, namely

85 Itsuki Hiroyuki quoted in: Wajima, *Tsukurareta "Nihon no Kokoro"*, 255-257.
86 Kata is a concept based on a Japanese word which Yano uses to mean patterned form.
87 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 161.
88 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 168.
89 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 53,59.
90 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 61.

yearning and furusato.

2.3.4 Furusato

The word *furusato* is considered an important concept in enka. The literal meaning of the word is "old village", but closer English equivalents are "home" or "native village", which is why it is often translated to "home town". Home town is therefore the translation I have chosen to use in this thesis. The word *furusato* consists of two ideographs which can also be pronounced *kokyō*, which is its Chinese-styled reading. However, *furusato* is preferred since *kokyō* is a Chinese loanword, thus the native Japanese word *furusato* appears more natural, familiar and culturally relevant.[91]

Jennifer Robertson explains that the quintessential features of the landscape of the *furusato* include forested mountains, fields, a river, and a cluster of thatch-roof farmhouses. Robertson further explains that *furusato* also connotes a desirable lifestyle, aesthetic summed up by the Japanese term *soboku*, which means artlessness and rustic simplicity.[92]

Similarly, Christine Yano lists nine common themes used to describe the *furusato* in "Tears of Longing". These nine themes are: 1) it is peaceful and quite; 2) it has many beautiful natural features; 3) it is a place where one can hear, see, feel and smell nature; 4) the food is especially good; 5) there are hot springs; 6) there are festivals; 7) there are rice paddies, evoking memories of Japan's agrarian past; 8) one's childhood there was blissful; 9) one's parents are there, especially one's mother.[93]

Yano continues by pointing out that the image of the *furusato* is a highly sterilized one. There is no mention of the poverty, the lack of modern amenities, the growing depopulation, the long hours of labour, or all the gossip. The *fursato* is hence exoticized: it is a "home town" seen from afar, a nostalgic destination for a resident of the metropolis. One does not want to live in the *furusato*, one simply wants to visit it.[94]

As mentioned, the concept of the *furusato* is an important one in enka. However, although it is seemingly important, the word in itself does not appear in a large number of the songs in my corpus. The noun, whether it is pronounced *furusato* or *kokyō*, only occurs in 8 of the 110 songs in my corpus. However other words which symbolise the image of the *furusato*

91 Jennifer Robertson, "Furusato Japan: The Culture and Politics of Nostalgia" *International Journal of Politics*, *Culture, and Society,* Vol. 1, No. 4, (Summer, 1988), 494, 496.
92 Robertson, "Furusato Japan", 494.
93 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 169.
94 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 169-170.

are frequently used in enka songs. Examples of these words which are often linked to *furusato* include: *kita* (north), *yuki* (snow), *matsuri* (festival), *okāsan* or *ofukuro* (mother), *mura* (village), *kuni* (native region), as well as verbs such as: *kaeru* (to return), and adjectives such as: *koishii* (long for).[95]

A line from the song "Bōkyō Sakaba", quoted in chapter 2.2.1, connects the leaving of the *furusato* to feelings of loneliness as well as feelings of sorrow. The applicable line is:

Kisha ga hito naki kita e iku

Which, as previously discussed, could either mean "a train going north without people", "a train going to the depopulated north", "With one cry of the whistle the train is going north", or "a train with crying people going north". Since the lyrics of the song make it clear that the protagonist comes from a village in the southern parts of Japan, he is most likely taking the northbound train to a major city like Tokyo or Osaka, or maybe even further north to the Tōhoku region or even to Hokkaido. The meaning of the line can therefore either symbolise the sorrow felt by the people leaving their *furusato*, or the loneliness felt when one leaves home and everyone one knows in order to go and work somewhere far away.

2.4 Other emotions

2.4.1 Loneliness

Loneliness is arguably one of the major themes represented in enka music. Many of the keywords discussed earlier in this chapter are often used in connection with loneliness. *Sabishii*, the Japanese word for loneliness, however, does not occur that often in the lyrics of enka songs, the word only occurs in 14 of the 110 songs in my corpus, or just 13%.

However, words which are directly or indirectly connected to loneliness often occur. Among the words in figure 2.1, the words *hitori*, alone, and *wakareru*, separate, are the two which stand out the most as words associated with loneliness. There are also keywords which more implicitly symbolise loneliness, such as *yoru*, night, and *sake*, alcohol or Japanese rice wine, although *sake* can symbolise despair as well, and is often connected with tears and crying.[96] This is in stark contrast to modern popular music where the night and drinking more often than not are considered as something joyous and social; a fun time spent with good

95 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 132-135.
96 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 132-135.

friends. A fact demonstrated by the band Justice in their song “The Party” from 2007:

Let's get this party started right
Let's get drunk and freaky fly
You with me so it's alright
We gonna stay up the whole night

In this song the protagonist is finding happiness in the fact that she is staying up the whole night drinking with her friends.

This positive image of alcohol is not unique to the song quoted above. A study conducted in 2005 by analysing the 279 most popular songs of that year according to Billboard magazine showed that the social and emotional consequences of substance use, for example alcohol, were more often than not depicted as positive. The study also found that substance use was usually motivated by social pressure, and most commonly associated with partying and sex.[97]

In enka songs, however, drinking at night is a lonely affair. As demonstrated in Misora Hibari's “Kanashii Sake” (Sorrowful Sake), from 1966:

Hitori sakaba de nomu sake wa
Wakare namida no aji ga suru
...
Sabishisa wo wasureru tame ni
Nonde iru no ni
Sake wa konya mo atashi wo kanashiku saseru

The sake I drink alone at the bar
Tastes of farewell tears
…
In order to forget the loneliness
I am drinking, and yet
Alcohol is making me sad tonight as well

There is another frequently occurring term in enka songs which makes the association between alcohol and weeping even clearer. This term is *tejaku-zake*, meaning “pouring oneself sake”. Precisely why this phrase has such a clear association with loneliness might need some explanation.

It is customary in Japan that when two or more people are drinking together one does not pour alcohol, might it be beer or rice wine, in one's own cup. The people you are together

97 Dr. Brian A. Primack, et. al., “Content Analysis of Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs in Popular Music” *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 162(2), (February 2008), 173.

with are expected to notice when your cup is empty and refill it for you, as it is expected from you to notice that someone else's cup is empty and refill their cup. Filling your own cup with alcohol is considered rude, as is asking someone to fill your cup.[98]

By adhering to this custom, the act of drinking becomes a social one. The act of drinking is not something one can do by oneself; another person is required in order to pour alcohol in one's cup. It is because of this custom that the phrase *tejaku-zake* becomes such a clear symbol of loneliness, since if one is pouring alcohol to oneself one is quite clearly drinking alone. Another term with the same level of association with loneliness as *tejaku-zake* is the term *hitori-zake*. The term means solitary sake. The term's connection to loneliness should therefore be self-evident.

There are several examples of the use of terms such as *tejaku-zake* or *hitori-zake* to connote loneliness in enka songs. One song by Kōda Shin even uses the term *tejaku-zake* as its title. The song "Sake yo" (Sake), released in 1988, by Yoshi Ikuzo is another example of this:

Hitori-zake tejaku-zake enka wo kikinagara

Lonesome sake, pouring myself sake, while listening to enka

Another similar example is from the previously analysed "Kanashii Sake" by Misora Hibari:

Hitori sakaba de nomu sake ...

Sake drunk alone in a bar …

However, the loneliness can also have its bright side. According to Mita, a person's loneliness can resonate with the loneliness of other people, thereby linking them up sympathetically. Mita calls this the paradox of loneliness, where the loneliness is shared and becomes a unique moment of solidarity. Mita continues with citing the enka song "Onna-sendō Uta" (Boatwoman's Song) by Mihashi Michiya, released in 1955 as an example of this paradox:

Kawaisō na wa minashigo dōshi
Kyō mo omae to tsunagu fune

How pathetic, fellow orphan

98 Brian Moeran, "Drinking Country: Flows of Exchange in a Japanese Valley", in *Drinking Cultures: Alcohol and Identity,* edited by Thomas M. Wilson, (Oxford: Berg. 2005), 41.

Mooring ships, again today with you[99]

Mita explains that the reason why loneliness becomes solidarity is connected to the rapid migration from rural areas to the swelling cities. During the time of rapid urbanization one heart could only completely "touch" another through each other's sense of loneliness. This loneliness can therefore be said to have connection to other emotions commonly found in enka songs: nostalgia and yearning.[100]

2.4.2 Nostalgia and yearning

Yearning and nostalgia have a strong connection to one another, especially in the Japanese language. This connection becomes apparent in the word *natsukashii.* This adjective is often translated to mean nostalgic in English, however, it would be more accurate to translate it as a remembrance, or something one misses from the past. The verb form, *natsukashimu*, makes the connection even clearer since it means to yearn for something or for someone. However, this verb is strangely not used in any of the songs in my corpus, the adjective form, *natsukashii,* occurs only once.

A word meaning to yearn which occurs more frequently is *koishii.* This word occurs in 10 of the 110 songs in my corpus. The adjective, used in much the same way as the verb "to yearn" in English, includes the ideograph *koi* which means love. The usage of the ideograph for love might suggest a greater emphasis on the passion felt for the person or place one longs for.

As shown in the section on *furusato* as well as in the section on loneliness, rapid migration from rural areas to the cities can bring strong emotions. One of these emotions is naturally the yearning for the rural area from whence one came, as well as one's nostalgic feeling towards that place. Especially in songs about the *furusato* the connection between the longing and the nostalgia for one's home town is made clear. This kind of yearning is demonstrated in Sen Masao's song "Bōkyō Sakaba" (Homesick Bar) from 1981. A song which might be considered the quintessential enka song about one's *furusato*.

Yoeba koishii
Ushi-oi uta ga
Kuchi ni deru no sa
Konna yoru wa

99 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 99.
100 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 99.

As I become intoxicated I yearn
The cattle droving song
Exits my mouth
On such a night

As the protagonist becomes intoxicated he starts to yearn, and as he yearns he unknowingly starts to sing the old cattle droving song he used to sing when droving cattle back home.

Yearning and nostalgia are important themes in enka, as demonstrated by the fact that, in the past, enka was often referred to as *natsu-mero*, short for *natsukashii merodii,* which means nostalgic melodies or desire songs. Nostalgia means yearning for the past, often one's childhood. However, the protagonist is just as often yearning for a lost love than the past in enka songs, the two themes are therefore closely related, yet not the same. The two emotions can overlap, as is the case when a protagonist in an enka song is reminiscing about a lost love in the home town far away. One example of this can be found in the song "Kaero ka na" (Should I Return Home) by Kitajima Saburō from 1965:

Koishikute yūn ja nai ga
Kaero ka na kaero ka na
Mura no ano ko wa kazoete jūkyū
Sozoro ki ni naru yappari ho no ji

I am not saying that I am yearning
But should I return home, should I return home
That girl in the village is already nineteen
I cannot concentrate, something is on my mind, of course, it is love

In this song, the protagonist is yearning for his home village, and he is wondering if he should return home to it. At the same time he is nostalgically thinking about a girl back in his home town, which he met when he was younger and was still living there himself. It can also seem like he did not realize that he harboured feelings of love for this girl until he was away from his native village. His memory of this girl and his home village might therefore have been sterilized from all negative emotions and memories.

As demonstrated in the song "Kaero ka na" above, one also yearns for a distant or lost love as well as one's home town. This kind of longing is an often used theme in enka songs. Examples include:

Yoshi Ikuzo: "Yukiguni" (Snow Country) (1986):

Aitakute koishikute nakitaku naru yoru
Soba ni ite sukoshi de mo hanashi wo kiite

I want to see you I yearn for you on this night when I want to cry
Please come close to me and just for a little while listen to my story

Itsuki Hiroshi: "Takase-bune" (Flatboat) (2006):

Nani ga kono yo de kanashii ka
Anata ni koishita koto dake yo

What in this world is sorrowful
Only to have yearned for you

Miyako Harumi: "Kita no Yado Kara" (From the Lodging Up North) (1975):

Onna-gokoro no miren deshō
Anata koishii kita no yado

I guess this is the lingering affection of a woman's heart
I yearn for you in the lodging up north

The kind of yearning expressed in this last song has a strong connection to another common theme in enka, namely lingering affection.

2.4.3 Lingering affection

Miren, meaning lingering affection, is another popular motif in enka songs. *Miren* mixes feelings of love, sadness, loneliness and longing to form "a lingering feeling of attachment which remains even after it has become impossible to form or maintain a relationship with the object of emotion".[101] The reason why it has become impossible to maintain the relationship might be an internal hindrance, or an external impediment such as physical or social distance, or even death. *Miren* often occurs in enka songs when the subject tries to suppress lingering affection.[102]

According to Yano *miren* is viewed as something foolish, yet it is normalized as part of "femaleness". Miren is seldom used in reference to men. For women, heartache will rapidly transform into lingering affection. *Miren* exemplifies loyalty, beauty and passivity, and can thus be viewed as a virtue or as something aesthetic.[103]

The word *miren* occurs in 19 of the 110 songs in my corpus, or in percentage: 17.3.

101 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 73.
102 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 73.
103 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 165-166.

And despite Yano's claim that *miren* is seldom used in reference to men, almost half of the songs which included *miren* as a motif are male songs:

Hikawa Kiyoshi: "Ōi Okkake Otojirō" (Otojirō Chasing Ōi) (2001):

> *Yappari ne sō daro ne*
> *Shindoi ne miren da ne*
>
> As I thought right? It is like that right?
> It is tiresome right? Lingering affection

Nevertheless, in most songs in which the men are referring to lingering affection they are trying to distance themselves from it:

Hitofushi Tarō: "Rōkyoku Komoriuta" (Rōkyoku Lullaby) (1963):

> *Nigeta nyōbō nya miren wa nai ga*
> *Ochichi hoshigaru kono ko ga kawaii*
> *Komoriuta nado nigate na ore da ga*
> *Baka na otoko no naniwabushi*
>
> I do not harbour any lingering affection for my wife who ran away
> But this child who wants her mother's milk is precious
> I am no good at things like lullabies
> But this is the *naniwa-bushi* of a foolish man

Although in some cases female singers also distance themselves from *miren*:

Sakura to Ichirō: "Shōwa Kare Susuki" (Susuki Grass Withered in the Shōwa Era[104]) (1973):

> *Chikara no kagiri ikita kara*
> *Miren nado nai wa*
>
> Because I lived my life with all my strength
> I do not have any lingering attachment

However, although some female protagonists distance themselves from the lingering affection, most of the time they embrace it:

Mizumori Kaori: "Hitori Satsuma-ro" (Lonesome Satsuma Route) (2007)

> *Anata wo wasureru tabi na no ni*
> *Itsu made miren ni naku no deshō ka*

104 The Shōwa era is a period in Japanese history corresponding to the years from 1926 to 1989.

Even though I am travelling to forget you
Until when will I weep in lingering affection

Although lingering affection is viewed as something aesthetic in enka songs, it is still based on the suffering caused by the heartbreak of a failed romance, or even the death of a loved one.

2.4.4 Happiness and sorrow

Tears and crying are the most frequently occurring words in the lyrics of enka songs, as shown in chapter 2.2. Singly or together they occur in nearly 75% of the songs in my corpus. These two words are rarely linked to any other emotion than intense feeling of sadness in enka songs.[105] Among my selection of songs I have not found any instances of tears of joy for example. There is also generally not a lot of joy in the lyrics of enka songs, as demonstrated by the fact that the Japanese word for enjoyment, *tanoshii,* only occurs once in my selection of 110 songs.

The word sadness in itself is also a frequently occurring word in enka songs. *Kanashii*, the Japanese word for sadness, occurs in 20 of 110 songs, or about 18%. This might seem low, but the number of songs which features sadness as a major theme is much higher, as evident by the high frequency of songs containing the word *namida* and/or *naku*. Sorrow in enka is also often connected to other emotional themes such as loneliness. Loneliness will often turn to sorrow, especially if alcohol is involved.

2.4.5 Impermanence

Mujōkan is a Japanese word which means a feeling of transience. The word in itself does not occur in any of the songs in my corpus, however, the motif in itself is common in enka songs. According to Mita the word is made up of two elements: "One is keen perception of change occurring over time in the actual world, including the self. The other is cathexis, or investment with significance, of things which go away or die away (as opposed to things which are growing or being created)".[106] As previously stated, although the word *mujōkan* does not occur even once in my selection of songs, it is still an important motif. This is made clear by the frequent use of keywords which symbolises transience and impermanence. The

105 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 98.
106 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 117.

most prominent of these are: *kaze* (wind), *tabi* (journey), *fune* (boat), *mizu* (water), *nagare* (flow), *hana* (flower), *awa* (bubbles), *tsuyu* (dew), *kamome* (seagull) and *hanabi* (fireworks).[107]

One of the most famous songs which uses *mujōkan* as a motif is "Kawa no Nagare no Yō ni" (Like the River Flows). This song was released in 1989 by Misora Hibari, who has been called the Queen of Shōwa or even the Queen of Enka.[108]

Shirazu shirazu aruite kita
Hosoku nagai kono michi
Furikaereba haruka tōku
Furusato ga mieru
Dekoboko michi ya
Magarikunetta michi
Chizu sae nai
Sore mo mata jinsei

Aa kawa no nagare no yō ni
Yuruyaka ni
Ikutsu mo jidai wa sugite
Aa kawa no nagare no yō ni
Tomedo naku
Sora ga tasogare ni somaru dake

Ikiru koto wa tabi suru koto
Owari no nai kono michi
Aisuru hito soba ni tsurete
Yume sagashinagara
Ame ni furarete
Nukarunda michi de mo
Itsuka wa mata
Hareru hi ga kuru kara

Aa kawa no nagare no yō ni
Odayaka ni
Kono mi wo makasete itai
Aa kawa no nagare no yō ni
Utsuri yuku
Kisetsu yukidoke wo machinagara

(...)
Itsu made mo
Aoi seseragi wo kikinagara

107 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 132-135.
108 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 39.

Unaware we walked
This long and narrow road
If we turn our heads we can see our home town
Far away in the distance
Rough road
And crooked road
There is not even a map
But then again this is life

Ah like the river flows
Gently
So much time passes by
Ah like the river flows
Endlessly
The sky is coloured with twilight

To live is to journey
On this endless road
The people we love are walking along us
While we search for the dream
Even when it rains
And the road is muddy
Someday again
A clear day will come

Ah like the river flows
Calmly
We want to entrust ourself
Ah like the river flows
As we wait
For the thaws of the changing seasons

(…)
Forever
While we listen to the murmur of the blue stream[109]

It is abundantly clear that this whole song is a metaphor for the transience of life. This fact is even spelled out in the second verse, when Misora sings that "to live is to journey on an endless road". Many of the previously mentioned keywords symbolising transience are also present in this song: flowing water, to journey and changing seasons.

The most interesting fact about "Like the River Flows" is that it was recorded and released just months before Misora's finale departure from the stage of life, and thus the song

109 As is generally the case in Japanese, the subject has been dropped in this song. I have therefore chosen to use the personal pronoun *we,* since I felt that the song is a metaphor for life in general, for all people. I also feel that this is a song which pertains to everybody, not just the person singing it.

became her swan song. “Like the River Flows” might therefore be seen as the ultimate metaphor for the transience of life. Misora's death occurred only four months after Emperor Hirohito, and some even say that the death of Misora Hibari marked the end of the Shōwa era in a greater degree than the death of the emperor who gave the period its name.[110]

2.5 The crossing of gender lines in enka

As mentioned previously in the thesis, a male singer singing a song from the female perspective is not a rare or unusual occurrence in enka songs. It is rather normal for males to sing female songs and vice-versa, it is actually so common that the audience does not find it unusual at all. In fact, one of the most famous male singers, Itsuki Hiroshi, made his début with the song “Yokohama, Tasogare”, a song which is written from the female perspective.

Another enka singer, Mori Shin'ichi, is particular popular among female fans because he is said to understand female emotions. One reason for this is because he frequently sings female songs. Nevertheless, enka singers and songs are not completely gender neutral, and the majority of male songs are sung by men and the majority of female songs are sung by women.[111]

There are several reasons why gender-crossing in enka songs is natural, as well as reasonable, both for the listener as well as for the performer. One reason is that Japan has a long history of gender-crossing in performance, starting with noh theatre. Noh is a form of Japanese musical theatre which developed during the fourteenth century, a characteristic of noh theatre is that most characters are masked. Although women greatly contributed to the development of noh theatre during its earliest history, noh soon became a male-dominated art. Evidence of this can be found in the fact that the development of women's masks for male actors started during the late fourteenth century.[112]

Continuing into the early Edo period (1603 – 1868), female roles in Japanese kabuki theatre were played by male actors, known as *onnagata* or *oyama*, both meaning female role. In 1629 the shogunate prohibited females from performing on stage, a prohibition which included both kabuki and noh, as well as other performing arts. Even today kabuki plays are mostly played by all-male troupes, however, there also exist all-female troupes where male

110 Alan Tansman. “Misora Hibari”, 214-215.
111 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 156-157.
112 Eric C. Rath, "Challenging the Old Men: A Brief History of Women in Noh Theater", *Women & Performance: a Journal of Feminist Theory,* 12:1, (2001), 98-99.

roles are played by female actresses, known as *otokoyaku*, which literally means male roles. The oyama even continued to portray female roles for the first decades after film was introduced in Japan.[113]

Another reason why gender-crossing in enka music is considered natural is because of the linguistic distinction between sex and gender in the Japanese language. Generally speaking, the suffix s*ei* is used to denote sex, while the suffix *rashii* is used to denote gender, with allusion to likeness and appearance. *Dansei* thus becomes the male sex, while *otokorashii* becomes a "male"-gendered person, with emphasis on the proximity to the male gender stereotype. Another suffix used is *teki*, which means that someone is acting in a way that resembles the opposite gender. *Otokoteki* therefore means a women who acts like a man. Gender can therefore easily be distinguished from sex linguistically in Japanese.[114]

Performing as the opposite gender in Japanese culture, whether it is in kabuki or enka, should therefore not be viewed as gender-crossing per se, as one does not take on the sex of the opposite gender. Instead a performer simply adapts the appearance or likeness of a the opposite gender. This kind of gender-crossing is usually done through song alone in enka, by singing songs with a narrative and language different from one's own gender. Although there are a few enka singers, like Mikawa Ken'ichi, who go beyond this and adapt the mannerism or make-up of the opposite gender.[115]

113 Jennifer Robertson, "The Politics of Androgyny in Japan: Sexuality and Subversion in the Theater and Beyond", in *American Ethnologist,* Vol. 19, No. 3, (Aug., 1992), 422.
114 Robertson. "The Politics of Androgyny in Japan", 421.
115 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 156-158.

Chapter III: Thematic and textual analysis of the changes

In the previous chapter I discussed the common themes and motifs found in enka songs in a general manner. In this chapter I will build on my findings and explore what kind of thematic changes the genre might have experienced during the last 55 years, or if any changes have occurred at all to this seemingly static genre. I will do this by comparing songs from different periods of time, both in terms of important keywords as well as in terms of emotional content. As previously stated, the songs I will be using for the analysis consist of 110 popular enka songs from the year 1955 up to the year 2010. This period is chosen because the late 50's was the time the "Koga merodii" style of *kayōkyoku* started to develop into what is today known as enka, as noted in chapter 1.4. 2010 was the year the research phase of this thesis ended.

3.1 My keywords separated into half-decades

Figure 3.1 is the expanded version of the chart of frequently used keywords in enka songs from chapter II. The figure lists how many songs the keywords occur in per half-decade.

At first glance it may seem like there have not occurred any major changes except for a few holes evenly spread out among the less frequently occurring keywords. Something which may be explained by certain words coming into and going out of vogue. It is therefore tempting to just assume that enka is in fact a timeless and static genre living in a constructed version of the world, which never seems to change. However, before I can rightfully claim this hypothesis to be a fact, I must delve deeper into this topic and explore the themes discussed in chapter II individually to see if the hypothesis stated above holds true or not.

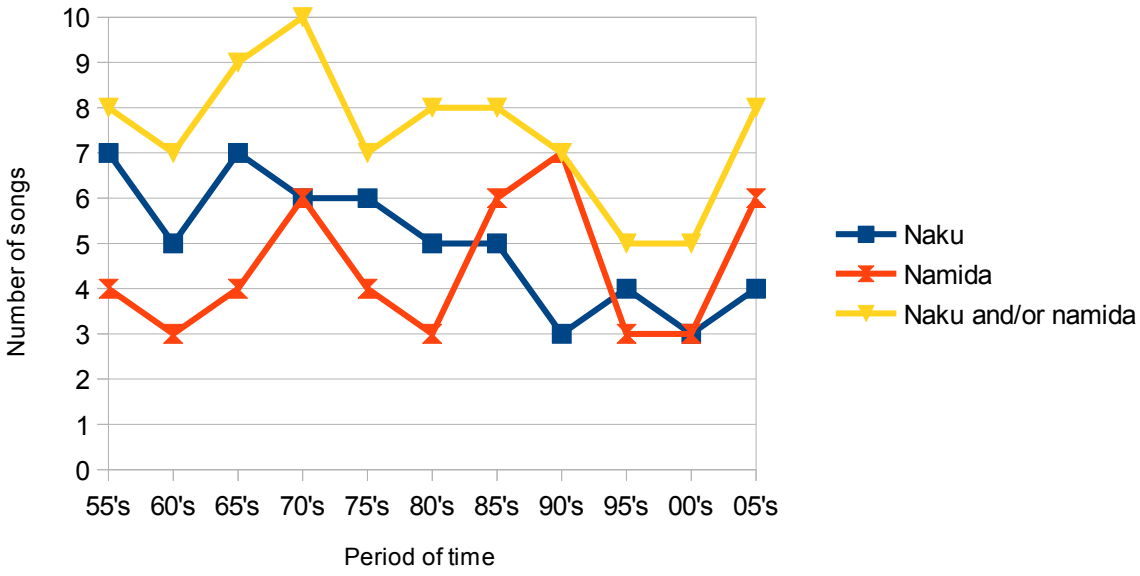
Figure 3.1 Word frequency in song texts per period of time

Year		'55s	'60s	'65s	'70s	'75s	'80s	'85s	'90s	'95s	'00s	'05s
Word	English Translation											
naku	to cry	7	5	7	6	6	5	5	3	4	3	4
namida	tears	4	3	4	6	4	3	6	7	3	3	6
kokoro	heart/soul	4	2	5	3	5	2	5	4	7	5	6
yume	dream	3	4	3	4	4	5	4	7	5	5	3
hito	person		6	5	5	6	4	4	4	7	5	1
anata	you		1	3	5	6	2	5	8	4	3	7
onna	woman	3	2	5	8	4	2	1	4	3	3	4
koi	love	2	5	4	6	1	3	3	6	1	2	3
hitori	alone	1	1	2	3	5	3	4	4	3	1	6
hana	flower		5		4	2	4	4	5	1	5	2
yoru	night	4	2	6	5	4	2	4	2	1	1	1
kaze	wind	2	5	1	3	1	4	3	1	3	5	3
otoko	man	3	1	5	2	1	4	3	2	4	4	1
watashi/atashi	I/me	1		1	4	5	1	2	4	4	2	4
futari	couple	3	1	1	2	1	2	5	4	2	3	4
mune	chest	4	3	2	1	4	0	1	6	2	2	2
sake	alcohol/sake			3	3	5	5	2	4	3	1	
ame	rain	1		3	2	1	3	4	7	2	1	2
wakareru	to separate	2	2	6	3	1	2	3		2	1	4
fune	boat	2	2	2		2	4	3		4	1	5
ashita	tomorrow	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	3	1	4	4
kaeru	return	2	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	4
kanashii	sad	2	1	3	2	1	3	1	2	2		3
ore	I/me	2	3	2	1	3	3	3	1		2	
ai	love	1		2				5	2	2	4	4
shiawase	happiness	1		1	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	2
miren	lingering affection	3	1	1	2	2	1		1	3	1	4

3.2 Crying through the ages

In figure 3.2 I have tracked the number of songs in which the Japanese word for weeping, *naku,* and the word for tears, *namida*, occurs, as well as the number of songs featuring one or both of the words at the same time.

Figure 3.2 Proportion of songs about weeping



As shown in the figure above, *naku* has more or less been in a slow but steady decline over the last 55 years. *Namida* on the other hand has experienced some spikes during this period, yet seems to have experienced no overall decline or increase. These spikes occurs first during the early '70s, then another spike during the late '80s and early '90s, and finally during the latter half of the 2000s. These changes are more or less reflected in the overall changes in how often tears of weeping occurs in enka songs. A point of interest might be the fact that all of the songs in my corpus from the early '70s feature one or more occurrences of either *namida* or *naku*. Another point of interest is that the exact same number of songs included the word *namida* and/or *naku* in the first period as in the last period of the time-line in the figure above. As was pointed out in chapter 2.4.4, tears and crying are rarely linked to any other emotion than intense feeling of sorrow in enka songs.

3.2.1 Sorrow in enka songs

As explained in chapter 2.4.4, sorrow is a major motif. The emotion is connected to most of the themes described in chapter II and is often expressed through tears.

The sorrow is often connected to departure in the popular enka songs released during the late '50s that have sorrow as a motif. The person feeling sorrow is either leaving his loved one or his home town, or has been left behind in his home town or by his loved one. One example of the motif of sorrow being used in this way can be found in the song “Wakare no

Ippon Sugi" (Lone Cedar of Farewell) by Kasuga Hachirō, released in 1955:

Naketa naketa
Koraekirezu ni naketakke
Ano ko to wakareta kanashisa ni
Yama no kakesu mo naite ita
Ipponsugi no ishi no jizōsan no yo
Mura hazure

I cried I cried
Uncontrollably I cried
For the sorrow of leaving that girl
Even the mountain jay cried
Stone Ksitigarbha of the lone cedar
Outside of the village

Ksitigarbha, or Jizō as he is known as in Japan, is the bodhisattva who looks after travellers. Stone statues of Ksitigarbha like the one mentioned in the song are often set up along the road to protect travellers and are common sights on Japanese roadsides. The protagonist in this song has therefore just left the village and his girl. Later in the song it is established that he is in fact going to Tokyo. The sorrow in this song is also connected to many of the other common motifs in enka. The mountain jay can be viewed as a symbol of nostalgia. The stone Ksitigarbha can be a symbol of transience as it is connected with journeying. The lone cedar is a clear symbol of loneliness. All of these motifs are connected with departure, and all of them can result in a feeling of sorrow.

Tears or weeping occurred in many of the songs released in the '60s, especially in the late '60s, as can be seen in figure 3.2. Tears are usually a symbol of intense sorrow in enka songs. Nevertheless in some of the songs released during the decade, tears are not viewed as something negative or undesirable. The tears can be seen as aesthetically pleasing and sadness can be given value through beauty due to a process which Mita calls "the pearling of sadness". Mita explains this phenomenon as a result of the "mood of tranquillity" which followed the turbulent renewal of the Ampo Pact[116] in the early sixties, and lasted into the early 1970s.[117]

One of the songs in which tears and sorrow are given beauty is the song "Mina no

116 The Ampo Pact, or *Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan*, was a treaty between Japan and the United States which was created to strengthened Japan's ties to the West during the cold war era. The treaty also included general provisions on the further development of international cooperation and on improved future economic cooperation. It became the subject of bitter debate, and even violent uprising, over the Japan-United States relationship

117 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*. 37-38, 518.

Shū" (Everybody) by Murata Hideo, released in 1964.

Mina no shū mina no shū
Ureshikattara hara kara warae
Kanashikattara nakeba yoi

Everybody, everybody
If you are happy laugh from your stomach
If you are sad it is good to cry

In "Mina no Shū" tears are viewed in a positive light. When one is feeling sad one should not try to hide it since hiding one's tears is bad for you. Instead one should let it out, as weeping is seen as something natural.

However, during the late '60s, the image of sorrow as a result of failed romance reappeared in songs such as the 1969 song "Ikebukuro no Yoru" (Ikebukuro Night) by Aoe Mina:

Anata ni aenu kanashisa ni
Namida mo karete shimau hodo
Naite nayande shinitaku naru no
Semenai wa semenai wa
Dōse kimagure Tōkyō no yoru no Ikebukuro

For the sadness of not being able to see you
The tears have even completely dried out
Crying and suffering, I want to die
I do not blame you, I do not blame you
After all, this is the moody Tokyo night in Ikebukuro

The increased popularity of songs about sorrow in the late '60s is also evident in the fact that songs about crying and tears sharply increased from the early '60s to the late '60s.

Sorrow seems to have continued to be a prominent motif in enka songs in the seventies as well. Evidence of this can be found in the fact that all the songs in my corpus from the early '70s had occurrences of either weeping or tears. This might imply that the mood of tranquillity ended earlier in enka songs than Mita suggests. Sorrow was still a main motif in popular enka songs during the late 1970s, although the number of songs in which weeping or tears occurred decreased. One of the songs from the late 1970s with sorrow as a motif is the song "Yumeoi-zake" (Dream-chasing Sake) by Atsumi Jirō, released in 1978.

Kanashisa magirasu kono sake wo

Dare ga nazuketa yumeoi-zake to
Anata naze naze watashi wo suteta
Minna agete tsukushita sono hate ni
Yoru no sakaba de hitori naku

This sake which distracts me from the sadness
Who named it dream-chasing sake?
Why oh why did you abandon me
After I devoted all of myself to you
I am weeping alone at the bar at night

In this song the sorrow of the protagonist is once again a result of the loneliness experienced after being abandoned by a loved one, which, as mentioned several times, is a common motif in enka songs.

3.2.2 Sorrow and lost love

Sorrow continued to be a major theme in popular enka songs released in the 1980s. Songs about sorrow also concerned men's struggle between duty and emotions during this period of time. An example of this can be found in Mori Shin'ichi's song “Fuyu no Riviera” (Winter's Coast), released in 1982.

Fuyu no riviera otoko tte yatsu wa
Minato wo dete yuku fune no yō da ne
Kanashikereba kanashii hodo
Damari komu mon da ne

On winter's coast guys called men
Are leaving the port like ships
The sadder they are
The more they keep silent

The stronger the emotions of a man are, the more reason he has not to express it. As is the case in several enka songs from this period, it is duty which is given priority. Another element which reinforces the already discussed images of men in enka songs is that the man leaves the woman abruptly without saying a word.

The emotional theme of sorrow was firmly placed in the sphere of failed romance and lost love during the 1990s as well. The song “Sake Hitori” (Sake Alone) by Itsuki Hiroshi from 1998 is one of many examples of this.

Sabishikaro sazo nikukarō

Aitasa tsunoru ikuji nashi
Abiru hi no sake hitori ga samui

You will be strained from sorrow and certainly strained from hatred
The desire to see you grows stronger but I lack courage
The lonely sake bathed in fire is cold

It is easy to see the difference between this song and the song "Fuyu no Riviera". In "Fuyu no Riviera" the man keeps silent in order to hide his true emotions so that he can perform his duty as a man. In "Sake Hitori" on the other hand, the only thing that is keeping the protagonist from showing his passion is that he is too much of a coward. This song seems to indicate a change in which men's conflict between duty and human emotions is starting to vanish as a motif in enka songs.

Not unexpectedly did the trend of sorrow being connected with lost love continue into the 21st century as well. Examples of this can be found in the previously quoted "Takase-bune" as well as in the following song:

Jero "Umiyuki" (Ocean Snow)[118] (2008)

Anata otte Izumozaki
Kanashimi no Nihonkai
Ai wo miushinai ganpeki no ue
Ochiru namida wa
Tsumoru koto no nai
Maru de umiyuki

Chasing you to Izumozaki
To the Sea of Japan filled with sorrow
On top of the cliff where one loses sight of love
The falling tears
Do not pile up
Just like snow falling in the sea

The protagonist is chasing his lost love in the song "Umiyuki". Although the protagonist states that the tears do not pile up this is not because only a few drops of tears are shed, it is because the tears drown in the vast Sea of Japan.

3.2.3 Concluding remarks on sorrow

During the late '50s, the sorrow felt in most of the popular enka songs was caused by

118 Referring to the Sea of Japan

homesickness. However, starting in the early '60s, songs about sorrow due to homesickness decreased sharply. Since the early '60s were characterised by a general mood of tranquillity, the number of popular songs with the emotional theme of sorrow was very low. In the few songs about sorrow, the sorrow was given value as something aesthetically beautiful in what Mita calls “the pearling of sadness”.

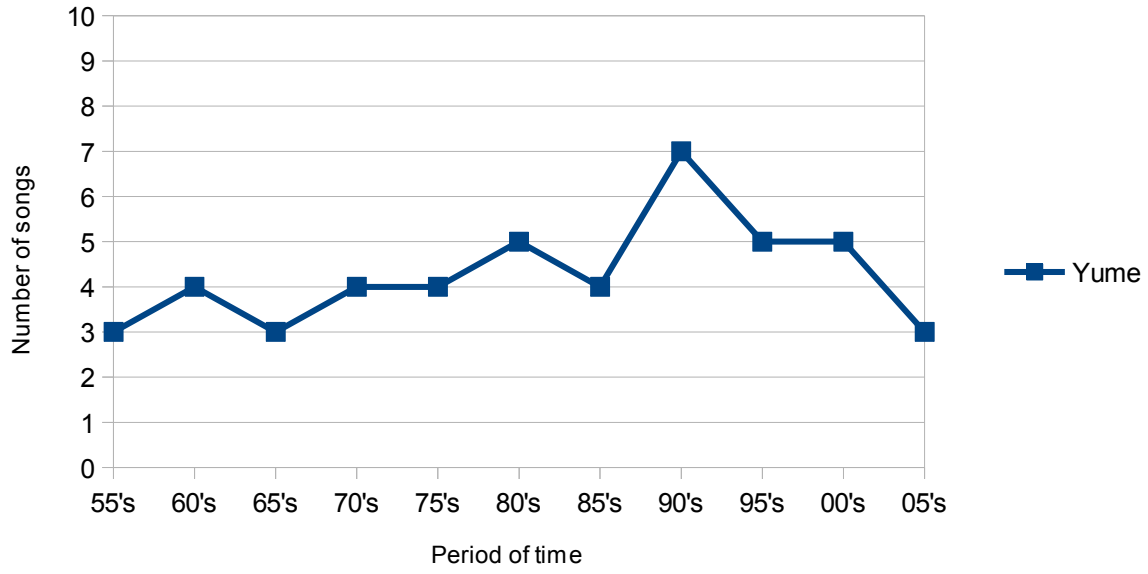
In the later part of the 1960s, the mood of tranquillity seems to have ended, at least if one consider the lyrics of popular enka songs to reflect the general mood of the population. During the late '60s songs about sorrow greatly increased, and the sorrow was generally the result of failed romance. Songs about sorrow seem to have reached their peak in the early '70s when all of the songs in my corpus featured the word tears and/or weeping. Sorrow due to homesickness had diminished during this period as the urbanization was starting to decrease and more and more Japanese felt a greater connection to the city in which they lived and worked.

Failed romance seems to have been the major reason for people feeling sad in the following decades as well, and very little changed in the motif of sorrow over the next decades. The only changes which seem to have occurred in songs with sorrow as a motif is that men also started to express their sorrow to a greater extent. This might be the result of the conflict between duty and human emotion, which has traditionally been a reoccurring theme in men's enka songs, having lost relevance in today's society. It might also be a result of greater gender equality in the Japanese society as a whole.

3.3 Dreams

The following is a chart of the number of songs containing the word *yume*.

Figure 3.3 Proportion of songs about dreams



Once again, the number of songs in which the noun *yume* occurs is the same in the late 1950s as in the late 2000s. It is therefore tempting to view this kind of stability in the most common keywords as proof that there has not occurred any changes to the enka genre. Furthermore, the usage of the word *yume* also seems to be more or less stable except for a spike in the number of songs concerning dreams occurring in the early '90s. This might therefore mean that the view of dreams in enka music is generally static except for some minor deviations. However, further analysis is required in order to see if the above statement holds true.

The spike occurs during the early nineties. This spike might explain why *yume* is the word which occurs in the highest number of songs in Christine Yano's study, since more than fifty percent of her selection of songs were released during this period of time.[119] This spike is the only major deviation in the occurrence of the word *yume*, which throughout the period is situated around forty percent of the songs. This spike will therefore be the focus of this section.

As discussed in chapter 2.3.2, dreams in enka songs usually dwell on the past and encapsulate the dreamer in a state of resignation and inaction, while at the same time making the hardship of life endurable. It is therefore natural to assume that the early nineties was a time when the Japanese people needed some way of enduring the hardship, as well as a way to dream about life in the past. Something must therefore have happened in the early nineties

119 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 219.

which made this type of dreaming necessary and desirable. If not, then the sudden popularity of songs about dreams is just a random coincidence, which resolved itself during the following years.

3.3.1 The lost decade

However, something that might be the cause of the high frequency of *yume* did in fact occur. It all started in 1989 with the death of both Emperor Hirohito and Misora Hibari, which ended the Shōwa era of Japanese history. The last decades of the Shōwa era were a period of great prosperity in Japan. However, the Japanese people might not have expected that the growing prosperity would end so soon after the closure of the Shōwa era.

The decade that followed is now known as “the lost decade”. During the early 1990s, the strong economic growth experienced in the country for the preceding 35 years, known as the “Japanese miracle”, abruptly ended. The cause of the collapse is complex and has been the topic of debate among economists for years. However, the main cause was the collapse of the Japanese stock market in 1990 and the burst of the housing bubble in 1993.[120]

The economic collapse was not the only aspect which made the '90s a “lost decade”, but the collapse can be seen as a background for the lost decade as a whole. Because of the economic collapse, many workers, especially older workers close to retirement, lost their jobs, and as a result these older men received a much lower pension than they had foreseen. The nation's homeless population also grew during this period, as did the suicide rate of men in their forties and fifties.[121]

The collapse was also hard on young entrants into the job market, something which led to the rise of a new social class, the *furiitā. Furiitā* is a portmanteau of the English word “free” and the German word “arbeiter” (worker). The *furiitā* are young, underemployed men in their teens and twenties, working a variety of low paying short-term jobs, often having to live with their parents well into their twenties. The term, which was coined during the late '80s, originally included young people deliberately choosing not to become white-collar workers. However, as jobs became increasingly scarce during the '90s, fewer and fewer deliberately chose the *furiitā* lifestyle, as increasingly more of Japan's youth were forced into this state of being.[122]

120 David Leheny, *Think Global, Fear Local: Sex, Violence, and Anxiety in Contemporary Japan*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006), 31.
121 Leheny, *Think Global, Fear Local*, 33-34.
122 Leheny, *Think Global, Fear Local*, 33-34.

The economic collapse which caused family men to commit suicide as a financial responsible option, and young people to lose hope in the future formed the backdrop of a decade with increased violence, juvenile delinquency, and increasingly ostentatious sexuality of young girls. All of this threatened to dissolve the view of Japan as a harmonious and orderly "family nation", causing what David Leheny calls "a vague anxiety in 1990s Japan".[123]

Leheny argues that the low point of the decade was the year 1995. 1995 brought bank closures which made it hard for anyone, let alone the government, to deny that the nation faced structural economic problems. The year started with the Hanshin earthquake which occurred on January 17th. The Earthquake caused massive damage, killing thousands. The government's failure to respond to the earthquake caused further decline in the public trust. 1995 also saw the horrendous sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway, caused by the Aum Shinrikyo cult. By mid-1995 the idea of an overarching crisis had become part of a broad national consensus, albeit with different opinions on what the crisis meant and how to best deal with it.[124]

3.3.2 Dreams in the lost decade

However, the question of whether Japan's lost decade was the cause of the increase in the number of songs about dreams during the early parts of the 1990s still remains. In order to answer this question, I will look at the textual content of popular enka songs containing the keyword *yume* released in the 1990s.

Amongst my selection, 12 of 20 songs released in the '90s had at least one occurrence of the word *yume*. A number not surpassed by any other keyword, and with the same frequency as songs about crying, i.e. songs with either *naku* or *namida*, and songs with the common second person pronoun *anata*. Songs about dreams seem to have been especially popular in the years between 1990 and 1996. 11 of the 16 songs released during this period contain the keyword *yume*.

The song "Love Song Spelling" was the first popular enka song released in the '90s to feature the word. This song is already discussed in chapter 2.2.1. I will therefore build on the findings on this song in that chapter, and expand on it. But first I present the song in its entirety.

123 Leheny, *Think Global, Fear Local*, 27-47.
124 Leheny, *Think Global, Fear Local*, 29, 34-35, 38, 42.

Horiuchi Takao: “Koi Uta Tsuzuri” (Love Song Spelling) (1990)

Namida majiri no koi uta wa
Mune no itasa ka omoide ka
Sore tomo osanai ano koro no
Haha ni idakareta komoriuta
Aa... yume hagure koi hagure
Nomeba nomu hodo sabishii kuse ni
Anta doko ni iru no
Anta aitai yo

Mado ni shigure no kono ame wa
Asu mo furu no ka hareru no ka
Sore tomo namida ga kareru made
Makura nurashite kazoe uta
Aa... yume hagure koi hagure
Nakeba naku hodo kanashii kuse ni
Anta idakaretai yo
Anta aitai yo

This love song mingled with tears
Is it a pain in my chest or memories
Or might it be from when I was very young
And my mother held me and sang me lullabies
Ah... my dreams are lost my love is lost
The more I drink the lonelier I feel, and yet
Where are you?
I want to meet you

This rain drizzling on the window
Will it rain tomorrow too or will it clear up
Or until my tears dry up
Soaking my pillow, counting song
Ah... my dreams are lost my love is lost
The more I cry the sadder I become, and yet
I want to be in your embrace
I want to meet you

The content of this song fits very well into the image of dreams in enka music. The protagonist of the song is dwelling on both a past love as well as on her mother, both connected to the state of the dream in enka songs according to Christine Yano. The dream does not encourage the dreamer to take action in the song either, instead it leaves her in a state of resignation. The dreamer states that she wants to meet her past love and/or her mother,

however this deep desire does not lead her to take any action.[125]

This song does indeed fill the need to dwell on the past. However, one song does not a trend make. I will verify if this was indeed a trend in enka music in the early '90s by analysing other popular enka songs from the same period.

Another song where dreams function as an important motif is “Kokoro-zake” by Fuji Ayako, which was released in 1992. Following is the first two verses of the song:

Naite amaeru anata ga itara
Taete yukemasu tsuraku tomo
Sonna onna no hitorigoto
Yotte sabishisa wasureru yō ni
Nomihoshimashō ka
Nomihoshimashō ka kokoro-zake

Ame ni nijinda noren no kage de
Tsuyoku ikiteku kobore-hana
Kurō kasaneta namida nara
Yume wo ashita ni tsunaida mune wo
Atatamemashō ka
Atatamemashō ka kokoro-zake

If you are present I cry depending on you
Even though it is painful I continue to endure it
Such is the monologue of a woman
I get drunk to forget the loneliness
Shall I drink up
Shall I drink up, sake of the heart

Blurred by the rain, in the shadow of the shop's curtain
This broken flower continues to live strongly
Since these tears are laden with hardship
My heart is bound with dreams of tomorrow
Shall I warm up
Shall I warm up, sake of the heart

This song concerns the lost love of a woman who has been discarded by her man. Although her life seems to be filled with sorrow and loneliness, she still has hope that the future will be better as she states in the song that her heart is bound with dreams of tomorrow.

The lyrics of this song might, like “Koi Uta Tsuzuri”, resonate with the listener. The song might reassure them that even though they are experiencing hardship, might it be heartache, financial trouble or any other kind of misfortune, they still have their dreams,

125 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 94.

which might help them get through a rough period. And as already explained, the '90s was a rough period for many Japanese citizens, so the demand for reassurance was probably high.

On the 21st of May 1995, a few months after both the Hanshin earthquake and the sarin attack, the song "Mi-re-n" (Lingering Affection), also by Fuji Ayako, was released. The song is not surprisingly about lingering affection, however parts of the second verse also concerns dreams:

Yume wo nakushicha dame da yo to
Daita anata ga watashi wo suteta
Sore na no ni... sore na no ni
Nikumikirenai ikuji nashi

You abandoned me while holding me and
Saying it is no good to lose your dreams
And yet... And yet
I do not have the guts to completely hate you

In this excerpt the protagonist is told by the person abandoning her not to lose her dreams. This might either mean that he asks her not to lose hope, or it might mean that he wants her to use her dreams to carry her from the past and into the future. Both interpretations are based on the image of dreams in enka as presented in chapter 2.3.2.

This verse can therefore resonate with the listener and might reassure them as well as the protagonist. This might be the reason why this song became popular in a time of growing anxiety. One particular line of the song also specifically told the listeners to not lose their dreams, as it was a way to endure hardship and give life meaning, while at the same time it tried to carry the listener from the hardship of the last few years and into a possibly better future.

In all the three songs analysed above dreams fulfil the purpose of either giving the dreamer hope and purpose during a time of hardship, or letting the dreamer reminisce about a much happier past. The early '90s was a period of growing anxiety, an anxiety caused for the most part by the Japanese economy experiencing a downward trend. The Japanese listeners of enka might therefore have favoured songs about dreams since these songs reassured them.

However, the three popular enka songs on my list from the period 1988 to 1989 also all contained the keyword *yume*. The three songs are: "Sake yo", "Kawa no Nagare no Yō ni" and "Mugi-batake". Let us take a look on how dreams are viewed in these three songs:

Yoshi Ikuzo: “Sake yo” (Sake) (1988):

Ano koro wo furikaerya yume tsumu fune de

Looking back upon those days on a boat loaded with dreams

Misora Hibari: “Kawa no Nagare no Yō ni” (Like the River Flows) (1989):

Aisuru hito soba ni tsurete
Yume sagashinagara

The people we love are walking along us
While we search for the dream

Oyonēzu: “Mugi-batake” (Wheat Field) (1989):

Moshimo kirai to iwaretara ora najoshita be
Ikiru kibō mo yume mo naku hitori de shinda be na

If you rudely say that you dislike me
I would have no desire to live on, nor any dreams left, and I would die alone.

I have chosen to only analyse the parts of the songs which deal with dreams, since none of these songs have dreams as their main motif: the main motif in “Sake yo” is loneliness; “Kawa no Nagare no Yō ni” is about the transience of life; and “Mugi-batake” is a song whose main motif is love.

In “Sake yo”, the protagonist is dwelling on the past, which as discussed is typical for how dreams are viewed in enka songs. In “Kawa no Nagare no Yō ni”, the protagonist is searching for her dreams, which might imply that dreams connotes a more positive meaning in this song. The dream in this song might therefore be said to mean fulfilment, and the search for fulfilment is just part of the transience of life. “Mugi-batake” contains a rather atypical use of dreams quite different from how dreams are viewed in other enka songs. In the majority of enka songs, the dreams usually help the dreamer endure hardship. Thus even if all hope is lost the dreamer still has his dreams, although it may be the only bright spot in the dreamer's life. In “Mugi-batake”, however, the protagonist is certain that if his love says that she dislike him, he will not only lose his will to live, but also his dreams. However, as the statement is hypothetical and since this is a love song, the statement could just be a hyperbole.

The higher frequency of songs which contain the word *yume* in the early '90s, found both in my selection of songs, and presumably in Yano's selection of songs as well, might therefore indeed have been a result of the hardship and growing anxieties in Japan's lost

decade. However, the question remains if the high occurrence of the keyword *yume* in enka songs during the period was a deliberate choice made by the songwriters, or if songs about dreams resonated better with the Japanese people during this time of hardship. I am tempted to suggest that it was a result of the latter.

An argument in favour of this stance is that the selection of songs Yano chose for her corpus of enka songs were all songs which were popular between the year 1991 and the year 1993, and *yume* was the keyword which occurred in the largest number of songs in her corpus, despite the fact that not all of the songs in her corpus were released during this period. This might suggest that songs about dreams were in fact popular among the Japanese listeners of enka, which might imply that songs about dreams resonated with the listener during the lost decade.

3.3.3 The old versus the new dream phase

I was originally planning to call the period in the 1990s with a high occurrence of the noun *yume* "the dream phase", however, Mita Munesuke already uses this phrase for another period in his work "Social Psychology of Modern Japan". Mita's dream period is quite different from the period in the lost decade I explored above, both in time and in subject matter. Mita sets his dream period to be from 1960 to the early 1970s. Mita also links this period to the feeling of tranquillity, something which is quite different from the lost decade which can be said to be linked to anxiety. Mita's dream phase can therefore be said to be the opposite of the dream period found in enka songs from the lost decade.[126]

In the decade following the disturbances of the Ampo revolt in 1961 there was a sense of "the end of history". This feeling of tranquillity, in addition to new political policies which provided capital, labour and markets necessary for rapid economic growth, led to a general feeling that nothing more of consequence could happen to the country. It was a dreamy feeling of having arrived at a happy ending. The dreams of the decade were the dreams of the masses of urban immigrants in the final uprooting phase of modernisation. These people had lost their home in the countryside as well as the traditional family ties. They were dreaming of new homes and new bases for their lives, both materially and mentally. The feeling of tranquillity ensured them that as long as they had dreams everything would work out since they believed that dreams could in fact come true.[127]

126 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 518-520.
127 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 518-521.

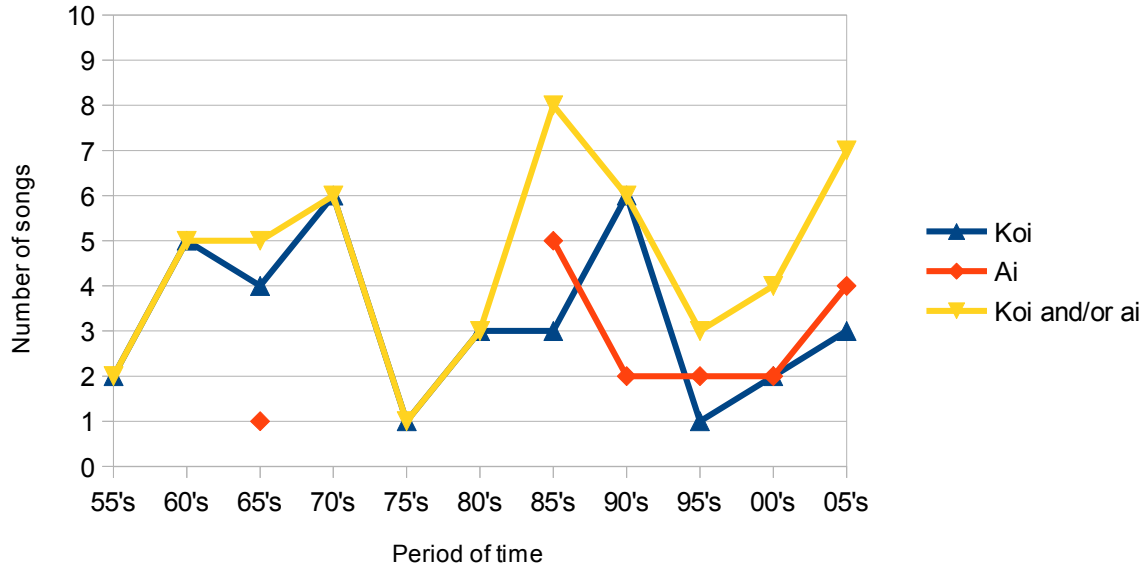
In enka songs on the other hand, dreams dwell on the past and encapsulate the dreamer in a state of resignation and inaction. In the dreams the possibilities are limitless, but that is only because in real life the opportunities are so limited for the dreamer. Whereas the dreams during the dream period of the '60s were based on the opportunities of real life, the dreams in enka are a way to escape the hopelessness of existence. It is therefore not hard to see why enka songs about dreams reached their peak during the anxiety-filled lost decade.

While the mood of tranquillity in the 1960s coincides with dreams based on realistic hopes of future opportunities, it cannot coincide with the type of dreams found in the majority of enka songs concerning dreams. Likewise, the popularity of songs about dreams during the lost decade cannot be said to be a second dream phase, since the '90s demanded, and produced, entirely different kinds of dreams than the dream phase of the '60s and early '70s.

3.4 Love

The figure below shows the number of songs in which *koi* and *ai*, both meaning love, but with slightly different connotations, occur in as well as the number of songs which uses either or both of those words.

Figure 3.4 Proportion of songs about love



The interesting thing to note here is that the deeper type of love, *ai*, is almost non-existent in

the lyrics of enka songs released before the late '80s, with only one sole song using the word *ai* in the 30-year period between 1955 and 1985. This might be a sign that enka has become cleaner and is moving away from the sexual connotations enka songs used to carry in the past, when the record industry used the ideograph for eroticism instead of the ideograph for performance when writing the word enka. However, it might also mean that the linguistic distinctions between the two words have started to fade, at least in the lyrics of enka songs.

3.4.1 Ai

In order to analyse changes in the emotional theme of love in enka, I will start by exploring the more permanent type of love, *ai*, and how it has changed over the ages.

I will start this analysis by analysing the only song released in the period between 1955 and 1985 which uses the word *ai*: the song "Hoshikage no Warutsu" (Starlight Waltz) by Sen Masao, released in 1966.

Wakareru koto wa tsurai kedo
Shikata ga nain da kimi no tame
Wakare ni hoshikage no warutsu wo utaō
Tsumetai kokoro ja nain da yo
Tsumetai kokoro ja nain da yo
Ima de mo suki da shinu hodo ni

Issho ni nareru shiawase wo
Futari de yume mita hohoenda
Wakare ni hoshikage no warutsu wo utaō
Anna ni aishita naka na no ni
Anna ni aishita naka na no ni
Namida ga nijimu yoru no mado

Sayonara nante dō shite mo
Ienai darō na naku darō na
Wakare ni hoshikage no warutsu wo utaō
Tōku de inorō shiawase wo
Tōku de inorō shiawase wo
Konya mo hoshi ga furu yō da

Parting is painful
But it is inevitable, it is for your sake
Let us sing this starlight waltz as a farewell
I am not cold-hearted
I am not cold-hearted
I still love you so much I could die for you

We smiled as we dreamt of the happiness
Of the two of us coming together
Let us sing this starlight waltz as a farewell
We were so deeply in love with each other
We were so deeply in love with each other
Tears blur the window of the night

You probably do not want to say goodbye
I guess You would cry
Let us sing this starlight waltz as a farewell
Let us pray for happiness from far away
Let us pray for happiness from far away
It even seems that the stars will fall from the sky tonight

The overhanging theme in this song is separation from a loved one. As explained in chapter 2.3.3, men love passionately but leave abruptly in enka songs. This song seems to be no exception. The interesting thing with this song is that the use of the word *ai* indicates that the relationship between the man and the woman is one of deep love, therefore it is not just a short romantic affair, which is far more common in enka songs. Another unusualness is the fact that it is the man who experiences this deep love. This is unusual since it is usually women who experience deeper love than men in enka songs. However, the man is usually the one who leaves, and "Hoshikage no Warutsu" is no exception in this regard.[128]

The permanent *ai* might have been chosen to describe the relationship in this song was to emphasise that this was not just a short, passionate romance, which is how romance is often viewed in the lyrics of enka songs. The fact that this was a "deep romance" suggests that the separation, which is imminent in the song, is going to be more painful than the breakups that the characters in enka songs normally experience. This is similar to how the man in the song "Mugi-batake", previously analysed in this chapter, states that he will lose his dreams, the only thing which protagonists in enka songs usually have left when all else seems lost, if his love says that she dislikes him. Both songs are therefore using seemingly unconventional, at least in comparison to other enka songs, ways to express their deep fear of being separated from the person they love.

3.4.2 The sudden impact of songs about deep love

As seen in figure 3.4, the use of the word *ai* experienced a sharp rise in occurrence during the late '80s, up from next to no occurrences. However the question remains why the use of *ai*

128 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 162-163.

suddenly became so popular. During the late '80s, Japan was experiencing an economic bubble, which when burst led to the so-called "lost decade". It is therefore tempting to link these two phenomena together. However, Fukuyasu Katsunori suggests that *koi,* not *ai*, is the type of love which exists in the Japan of the bubble economy. It therefore becomes unnatural to suggest that the bubble economy is the cause of the sudden increase of the word *ai* in the lyrics of enka songs, although it is possible that the increased usage of the word *ai* arose as an antidote. Another reason might be that the late '80s felt like a stable period for the Japanese, and *ai* is considered as the stable form of love. However, the whole post-war era up to this point can be said to have been more or less stable, it therefore seems unlikely that the sense of stability did not result in the use of *ai* until the late '80s.[129]

The sudden increase in songs which used *ai* might be explained with a generational shift in the performers of enka songs. However, nearly all of the songs which used the word *ai* in the late '80s were sung by singers who had already experienced long careers, like Yoshi Ikuzo, Itsuki Hiroshi and Misora Hibari. Most of the songs were also written by song lyricists who had previously written several popular enka songs. The song "Tsuioku" performed by Itsuki Hiroshi is actually written by the most-selling Japanese songwriter of all times: Aku Yū. A generational shift in either performers or songwriters can therefore be ruled out.

The only other possible explanation, in addition to it being a result of, or an antidote to, the bubble economy, is the previously mentioned hypothesis that enka, as a genre, is becoming cleaner. As stated in chapter 1.3.1, the word *enka* used to more often than not be written with an ideograph with sexual connotations the first years after the genre gained its name. The word was soon changed to use the ideograph meaning "performance", which made the name of the genre cleaner, however, some of the genre's associations with outlaws still remained.[130]

In order to see if the genre actually went through some sort of self-censorship during the late 1980s, which continued into the 1990s and 2000s, I will look at the lyrics of some of the songs which contain the motif of deep love.

Okada Daisaku: "Mushaku Ryojō" (Wuxi Travelling Mood) (1986)

Fune ni yurarete unga wo ikeba
Baka na wakare ga kuyashii yo
Anna ni aishita anna ni moeteta

129 Fukuyasu, *Koi to Ai Kara no Gengogaku*, 7-8.
130 Wajima, *Tsukurareta "Nihon no Kokoro"*, 250.

The boat rocks as it proceeds through the canal
I regret the foolish farewell
I loved you so much I was so fired up

Itsuki Hiroshi: “Tsuioku” (Reminiscence) (1987)

Omoide wa tsune ni mabushikute
Kono mune no oku ni kirameku
Hitamuki na ai wo shinjiai
Inochi made kaketa tsukihi yo

The memory is constantly radiant
Glimmering in the back of my heart
We believed in single-minded love
A time when we gave even our lives

Nagayama Yōko: “Suterarete” (Discarded) (1995)

Demo ne ano hito warukunai no yo
Uwasa shinjita watashi ga warui
Sō yo hitori ni naru no ga kowakute
Tsukushi sugite sasage sugite suterareta no
Donna ai de mo ii sugareru mono nara
Donna ai de mo ii yarinaoseru nara
Demo ne kaereru heya wa heya wa mō nai no
Dakara dakara konya wa tsuki atte yo

However, he is not bad
I was bad for believing the rumours
That is right I am afraid of being alone
I gave too much I sacrificed too much I was dumped
Any love is fine as long as I can cling to you
Any love is fine as long as I can start over again
However, I do not have a room, a room I can go home to
So let us keep each other company tonight

Mizumori Kaori: “Aki no Miyajima” (Miyajima in Aki)[131] (2009)

Anata wo donna ni aishite mo
Itsu ka kokoro no surechigai
Aki no Miyajima shuiro no torii
Mune no itami wo wakatte hoshii...

No matter how much I love you
Someday we will no longer be connected emotionally
The vermilion torii of Miyajima in Aki

131 Can also be translated as “The shrine island of Aki Province”

I want you to understand the pain in my heart

None of the songs translated above seem to stray far from the common motifs and themes found in other enka songs about romance. The four songs above are all about loneliness, separation and lost love. In addition, the word *ai* does not seem to make any major difference in the composition of the songs and could easily be interchanged with *koi*. Some of the previously quoted songs, such as "Sake yo", "Murasaki no Ame" and "Kawa no Nagare no Yō ni" all use the word *ai* to refer to love. These songs were also used in chapter II to illustrate how the common motifs of loneliness, tears, and impermanence, respectively, are imagined in enka songs. It might therefore seem like the use of the word *ai* instead of *koi* to refer to love has not led to any major changes to the motifs commonly found in enka music. This change should instead be viewed as a minor semantic change in enka lyrics.

The hypothesis that the increased use of *ai* instead of *koi* is proof that the genre is becoming cleaner also seems to be flawed. The song "Suterarete" quoted above seems to be proof of this. In the song the protagonist has been discarded, seemingly at her own fault, and seems to be desperately searching for someone to love again, even if it is just for one night. The protagonist states that she just wants someone to keep her company and that any type of love would do. She is therefore seemingly not searching for the deep love which the word *ai* connotes, but rather a short-lived affair for the night. This is largely congruent with enka's view of romance: as short and fleeting. It also indicates that despite the fact that the choice of words in enka lyrics have changed, the genre has not become any cleaner.

3.4.3 The history of songs about short-term love

As seen in figure 3.4, the use of the word *koi*, which means love, has varied throughout the different periods of time. In this section I will explore if there have been any changes in the enka songs with romantic themes, focusing on the songs which use the Japanese word for temporal love, *koi*. I will accomplish this by first looking at some of the songs in which *koi* occurs from different periods in time.

Murata Hideo: "Muhōmatsu no Isshō" (The Life of Wild Matsu) (1958)

Naku na nageku na otoko ja nai ka
Dōse minoranu koi ja mono
Guchi ya miren wa Genkai Nada ni
Sutete taiko no midare uchi

Yume mo kayoeyo myōto nami

Do not cry, do not grieve, are you not a man?
In any case it was just fruitless love
Throw away complaints or lingering affection in the Genkai Sea
Like the disorderly beat of the taiko drum
The dream is also going back and forth, the wave of a man and a woman

The description of the love in this song is quite different from the deep love found in for example “Hoshikage no Warutsu” analysed in chapter 3.4.1. In “Muhōmatsu no Isshō” showing emotions is clearly not part of being a man. Crying and grieving is thus seen as something that men do not do. However, this might just be how Muhōmatsu wants his outward appearance to be, and that Muhōmatsu in reality is quite an emotional person, yet keeps trying to appear as strong and emotionless in order not to be seen as a weak man by others. This song is in fact based on the film with the same name, which was first released in 1943, and then remade in 1958, coinciding with the release of the song. The film gives more insight into the character than the song can provide, and judging by how Muhōmatsu is portrayed in the film, the statement that his portrayal in the verse quoted above is just how he wants to be viewed seems to hold true. In the film, Muhōmatsu is first characterised as a strong man who is rude to others, likes to get into fights, and has only cried once in his life, when he was a child. But as the film progresses, it becomes clear that this is just his outward appearance and that he is in fact a reticent and kind man who experiences a lot of emotions. One can therefore assume that the same is the case with the Muhōmatsu portrayed in the song. Although Muhōmatsu is an emotional being, he tries to appear as an emotionless and strong-willed man in the song. This also shows the struggle between duty and human emotions men in enka songs experiences.

In “Hoshikage no Warutsu”, on the other hand, the man is obviously showing his emotions and is admitting that a farewell would make him cry, something Muhōmatsu is unwilling to admit. These two songs provide an excellent example of men's struggle between duty and human emotions which is a common theme in enka music. In “Muhōmatsu no Isshō”, as is often the case in male enka songs, duty wins over emotions. In “Hoshikage no Warutsu”, on the other hand, human emotions triumph over duty. Although the reason for the parting in the song might be because the man is indeed fulfilling his duty.

The same struggle continued in popular enka songs about temporal love released in the 1960s as well, as can be seen in Kitajima Saburō's song “Satsuma no Onna” (The Woman

from Satsuma) released in 1968.

Giri aru hito ni se wo mukete
Wakarete kita to kimi wa naku
Ame ga furufuru Tenmonkandōri no
Aoi ranpu ni mi wo yoserya
Aa hiren no tabi no dora ga naru

Dutifully turn your back on a certain someone
You cried when we parted
As the rain is pouring down I lean in close to
The blue lamp in the street of Tenmonkan[132]
Ah the gong of the journey of a blighted love is sounding

In this song, like in "Hoshikage no Warutsu", it is the man who leaves the woman. The conflict between duty and human feeling is also a subject in this song. The man turns his back on the person he loves and leaves her in order to perform his duty as a man.

Amongst the songs in my corpus released in the late '70s only one sole song contains the keyword *koi*. The song is sung by Yashiro Aki and is called "Onna no Yume" (A Woman's Dream). The song was released in 1975. Following is the first verse of the song:

Ichido de ii kara hitonami ni
Anata no tsuma to yobarete mitai
Aa yume wo... yume wo...
Yume wo mitai no yo
Tanin ja nai yo to dakishimerarete
Isshō ichido no koi ni naku

Because only once is sufficient I'd like to
Ordinarily be called your wife
Ah the dream … the dream
I want to see the dream
Embrace me and tell me that I am not a stranger
Crying over a once in a lifetime love

The lyrics of this song also seem to follow the conventions of romance in enka songs. The woman is crying over a short-lived romance, which she imagined was something more than it was. This causes her suffering, and she weeps over a romance which was not real, only imagined, and only seems to come to life in her dreams.

132 Tenmonkan is a shopping area in the city of Kagoshima.

3.4.4 The increases and decreases in popularity of enka songs about love

Songs about love seem to have gained popularity during the '80s, especially during the late '80s with the sudden rise of songs about deep love. However, temporal love was still popular, and one of the songs about short-lived love released in this decade was Hosokawa Takashi's song “Kita Sakaba” (Northern Bar) released in 1982:

Kita no sakabadōri ni wa
Nagai kami no onna ga niau
Chotto ohitoyoshi ga ii
Kudokare jōzu na hō ga ii
(...)

Yume oi hito wa gurasu no sake to
Omoide wo nomihoshite
Yabureta koi no
Kazu dake hito ni
Yasashiku dekiru
Kita no sakabadōri ni wa
Otoko wo nakaseru uta ga aru

Konya no koi wa tabako no saki ni
Hi wo tsukete kureta hito
Karameta yubi ga
Sadame no yō ni kokoro wo yurusu
Kita no sakabadōri ni wa
Onna wo yowaseru koi ga aru

On the bar street in the north
Women with long hair fit in
Being a bit kind is good
One who can be seduced is good
(…)

The people chasing their dreams drink up
Their sake together with their memories
The more lost love they have experienced
The kinder they can be to others
On the bar street in the north
There is a song making men cry

The love of tonight is the person who lit the tip of my cigarette
Entangled fingers
Relaxing my guard like it is destiny
On the bar street in the north
There is love intoxicating women

The narrative is somewhat different in this song, but the poignant view of romance commonly found in enka songs, that love is something unreal and imaginary, still holds true. This song also gives an impression of love as frequent and short one-night affairs, and it is tempting to use the English word "affair" instead of love in the translation. Love is also put in a somewhat negative light: it has the ability to intoxicate women and it brings sorrow to a large number of people. However, the view of *koi* as a temporal, imaginary love still holds true in this song and it might even have become more poignant. This might indicate that the sudden rise in popularity of songs about deep love arose as a counterweight against this development.

Songs about temporal love seem to have decreased once again during the late 1990s. The word *koi* only occurs in one song released in the late '90s from my corpus. The song is "Naruto Kaikyō" (Naruto Strait) released in 1996. It is sung by Godai Natsuko.

Kami ga midareru mosuso ga nureru
Kaze ni kamome ga chigiretobu
Tsurasugiru tsurasugiru koi da kara
Yume no naka de mo naku kiteki
Naruto Kaikyō fune ga yuku

My hair is disarranged and the hem of my skirt is wet
The seagulls are flying scattered in the wind
It is too painful, it is too painful, because it is love
Even in my dreams the steam whistle is crying
The boat moves through the Naruto Strait

"Naruto Kaikyō" is yet another song about the pain of separation, and the transience of love. The woman is waving goodbye to her love as he is sailing out to sea. This seems to be a common motif in enka songs about love, as it was the theme in "Hoshikage no Warutsu", "Muhōmatsu no Isshō" and in "Satsuma no Onna" as well. It is also a very old image in Japanese popular songs about love, and especially songs about lingering affection. This image was often used from the pre-war years up until just after the Second World War ended. This theme is therefore not unique to the enka genre, yet can be said to show that the roots of the enka genre are set in pre-war Japan.[133] "Naruto Kaikyō" is also very sorrowful, the metaphor of the crying steam whistle is used, which is often used as a symbol of sorrow.[134] The painfulness of love is also evident in this song.

Even though songs about deep love seem to have been more popular during the late

133 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 76.
134 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 134.

2000s, several songs about temporal love were released during the period as well. One of these was the song “Hashiba no Watashi” (Hashiba Crossing) by Itsuki Hiroshi, released in 2008. Following is the second verse of the song:

Kita wa Michinoku higashi wa Kazusa
Fune no muku mama kaze no mama
Sugegasa daita futarizure
Sotto tsunaida te to te no nukumi
Koi no yamiyo no Hashiba no Watashi

North lies Michinoku west lies Kazusa
Overlooking the ship, as the wind blows
Alone together we braced our bamboo hats
Connected softly by the warmth of a hand in a hand
The dark night of love in Hashiba Crossing

This song has a more positive view on love than has been the case in previously analysed songs. Instead of the separation of two lovers, which has been the case in almost all of the previously analysed songs about love in this thesis, the two lovers left their home town together to journey to the capital, and have not yet parted ways. The lack of sorrow and despair in might be another indication that the enka genre has become cleaner in recent history.

It seems that although the frequency of occurrence has changed from decade to decade, the thematic elements in the songs about temporal love have not changed much. Some songs which diverge from this do exist as a matter of course. However, *koi* seems to overall be frequently linked to failed romance and separation as well as being connected to a boatload of metaphors about ships.

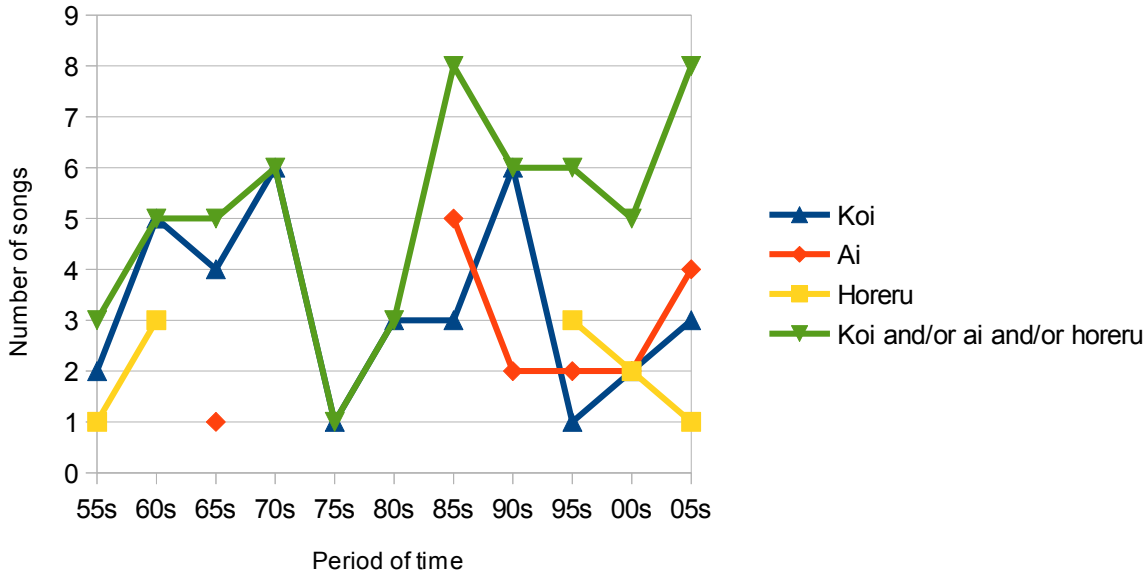
3.4.5 Koi, ai and horeru

The conclusions to both the section on temporal love as well as the section on deep love state that there have not been any major changes to the way romance is viewed and portrayed in enka songs. The separate sections also show that there seems to be no significant differences between the two written forms of love either. The only difference between the two forms seems to be that the word *koi* was preferred to represent love up until the late '80s when *ai* took over as the most used word to express love in enka songs. Although, *koi* did occur more frequently during the early '90s.

The only other change to the genre is the fact that the frequency of enka songs about

love in my corpus seems to have fluctuated widely through the years. The low-point occurred in the late '70s when the word love only occurred in one song. The high-point was in the late '80s when 8 out of 10 songs used one of the two words meaning love. It might also seem like songs about love decreased during the late 1990s as well when looking at figure 3.4. However, when taking into account songs which uses the keyword *horeru*, which is a verb meaning "to fall in love" or "to be in love", this image changes slightly as can be seen in the chart below:

Figure 3.5 Proportion of songs with the keywords *koi*, *ai* and *horeru*



As can be seen, adding *horeru* to the chart gives a much better picture of the number of songs which actually feature the motif of romance. It also shows that songs about love did not decrease during the late 1990s, instead the nouns *koi* and *ai* were replaced by the verb *horeru.*

The conclusion therefore seems to be that the view of romance in enka songs are largely unchanged, with only a few songs, such as "Hoshikage no Warutsu" and "Hashiba no Watashi" straying from the usual representation of love in enka songs. Love is viewed as short-lived, maybe only lasting one night. The men leave, usually on a ship, and the women are left behind. Both men and women grieve, although the women seem to grieve more than the men.

3.5 Loneliness and longing

Loneliness and longing are two related emotions, both in real life and in enka songs. In this part of the thesis I will explore the relationship between these two emotions in enka lyrics, as well as exploring what causes loneliness and longing in these songs.

As explained in chapter 2.4.1, loneliness is a major theme in enka, and is often connected to other major themes such as nostalgia, yearning and failed romance. Loneliness often leads to tears, but it can also have a bright side, as loneliness can form solidarity. This was especially true during the time of rapid migration from rural areas to the cities. Many people could therefore relate to the kind of loneliness found in these kinds of songs. However, since the majority of the Japanese people have already moved to the cities or the suburbs, it is expected that this kind of loneliness should have diminished during the last few decades. In order to verify this hypothesis, I will analyse different enka songs containing the motif of loneliness and see if I can find any changes.

Similar to loneliness is yearning. As explained in chapter 2.4.2, in enka songs one can yearn for one's *furusato,* for a loved one, or even for both at the same time. It is therefore expected that the development of yearning for one's home town should follow the changes in loneliness. Likewise, it is expected that yearning for a loved one should follow the development of love as a theme in enka, and not change much over the period. In order to verify or denounce this hypothesis I will analyse the development of songs with yearning and nostalgia as a theme.

Many of the popular enka songs released in the 1950s were about rural youth gone to the big cities and yearning for their *furusato*. This yearning is connected to what Mita calls "The contrasting scheme of 'urban loneliness' and 'rural warmth'"[135] However, during the same period this generalisation started to break down, and was replaced by sympathy and concern for the people left in the native village, or the yearning for someone who has left the *furusato* and moved to the big city.[136]

The following song is about precisely this type of sympathy for people left behind in the home village. In the song the protagonist is not the one who leaves his home town or his love. The protagonist is instead the person who gets abandoned by his girl, who left him behind in their home town in order to travel to the capital. Following is the first verse of the

135 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 114.
136 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 114-115.

song:

Fujishima Takeo: “Otsukisan Konban wa” (Good Evening Moon) (1957)

Konna sabishii inaka no mura de
Wakai kokoro wo moyashite kita ni
Kawaii ano ko wa ora wo misutete
Miyako e itchatta
Ringobatake no otsukisan konban wa
Uwasa wo kiitara oshiete okureyo nā

In this lonesome country village
My young heart was on fire
For the lovely girl who left me behind
And went off to Tokyo
Oh moon of the apple orchard good evening
If you hear some news be sure to tell me, now[137]

This kind of loneliness was a normal theme during the late '50s, as more and more people had moved to the cities and the sympathy had shifted from the people being separated from their village to the people being left behind. However, this did not mean that urban loneliness had completely disappeared as a motif in popular music. According to Mita, the emotional theme instead shifted to the loneliness of people without a home town, the people living completely alone.[138]

Another song from the late '50s which concerned yearning and loneliness is “Wakare no Tōdai” (The Lighthouse of Farewells) by Kasuga Hachirō, released in 1958. It is not the person who is left behind who is feeling lonely and is yearning in this song, but the person who left his home in order to travel somewhere far away.

Naite naite
Harubaru tabi yuku tori mo
Itsu ka kaeru yo
Kokyō no sora e
Asu wa takoku de yumemiru umi wo
Terase misaki no tōdai akari

Crying crying
Even the bird travelling far away
Is someday returning home
To the skies of the home town

137 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 103.
138 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 102-104.

Tomorrow I'm in a foreign province, the dreaming sea
Illuminated by the glow from the lighthouse of the coast

The protagonist of this song is on his way to another province or to another country. He is yearning for his home town and seems to envy the bird who will someday return home.

Mita states that songs about the miserable solitude of the city began to appear during the last few years of the 1950s. This included the song “Kaeru Kokyō mo Nai Ore sa” (I Without a Home Town to Return to) which demonstrated that the image of being able to return to the warmth of one's home town was starting to collapse. Most likely as a result of the urbanization that occurred during the late 1800s and early 1900s.[139]

However, the sympathy for those left behind in the home towns seems to have continued in the lyrics of enka songs well into the mid-sixties. The song “Kaero ka na” (Should I Return Home) by Kitajima Saburō from 1965 is one indication of this notion.

Sabishikute yūn ja nai ga
Kaero ka na kaero ka na
Kuni no ofukuro tayori ja genki
Dakedo ki ni naru yappari oyako
Kaero ka na kaeru no yosō kana

I am not saying that I'm lonely
But should I return home, should I return home
The letters from my mother in the home town says she is healthy
But to worry is of course part of being parent and child
Should I return home, is it anticipation of returning home

The lack of subject in the lyrics of the song makes the whole song ambiguous. The lyrics can either indicate that the protagonist is worried about his mother feeling lonely back home in the village and that he therefore wants to go and visit her. Or it can indicate that he is lonely in the city and wants to return home. The ambiguity therefore makes it so that the lyrics are relatable to both the listeners feeling lonely in the big cities as well as to the listeners feeling lonely back in the increasingly abandoned rural areas of Japan.

Despite the “I without a home town to return to” sentiment, the yearning for one's home town continued to be an emotional theme during the '60s, something which can be seen in the above analysed song “Kaero ka na”. However, in songs like the previously quoted “Kanashii Sake”, the yearning is not directed towards one's home town, instead the protagonist is yearning for a loved one she was forced to say goodbye to. With the exception

139 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 115.

of the above cited “Kaero ka na” and “Kanashii Sake”, yearning seems not to be such a popular theme during the sixties. This was especially true during the early sixties, since both these songs were released during the latter half of the 1960s. In the song “Rōkyoku Komoriuta” from 1963, the protagonist even states that he does not bear any lingering affection for his wife who left him, meaning that he does not yearn for her either, although, whether he shows his true feelings or not in the song is debatable.

Mita explains that songs about sentimental homesickness went into a steep decline after 1959. Even though songs about the *furusato* were still released after this point in time, such as Kitajima Saburō's “Kaero ka na”, songs about sentimental homesickness went into decline in the enka genre as well. Mita continues to explain that homesickness transformed into an urbanite's yearning for “nature” in the period after the Ampo uprising in 1960. The reason being that fewer and fewer young natives of farming villages took their summer vacations in their home town. Instead more and more of the young urbanites took their summer vacations by the seashore or in the mountains, searching for “nature”. As was the case with loneliness, this might indicate that more and more of the Japanese youth living in the big cities seemed to begin to identify themselves as urbanites instead of as village-dwellers who just lived in the city in order to work and earn money.[140]

The decline in songs about sentimental homesickness seems to have continued during the 1970s as well. Although several songs from the decade were about returning somewhere, that place was never their home town. These songs were usually about returning to their loved one. However, songs describing the loneliness of being left behind in the home village were still popular, and some of these songs makes it seem like the loved ones did not always return to the person loving them. A song containing this motif is “Kita no Yado kara” (From the Lodging Up North) by Miyako Harumi, released in 1975:

Anata kawari wa nai desu ka
Higoto samusa ga tsunorimasu
Kite wa moraenu sētā wo
Samusa koraete andemasu
Onna-gokoro no miren deshō
Anata koishii kita no yado

How are you?
Everyday the coldness is growing worse
Even though I know you will not wear it

140 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 115-116.

I have knitted this sweater for you enduring the coldness
I guess this is the lingering affection of a woman's heart
I yearn for you in the lodging up north

The person doing the yearning in this song is the woman writing this letter to the man she loves. The protagonist herself is left behind in the home village up north. The lyrics makes it seem like her beloved will not return to her, since she states that she knows that she will not see her loved one wearing the sweater she made for him. Even though lines such as "this is the lingering affection of a woman's heart" makes it obvious that this is a letter written by a woman to her lover, parts of the lyrics of the song almost makes it seem like this letter could just as easily be written by a mother to her son. This becomes true, according to Yano, because one of the ways a woman expresses her love for someone in enka songs is to nurture and tend to him like a mother would.[141]

The change from the loneliness of being away from one's home town to the hardship of being truly alone in a big city, which Mita stated occurred after the period of rapid urbanization had started to halt, started to become evident in enka songs released during the 1970s. This type of loneliness is especially apparent in the song "Shinjuku, Minatomachi" (Shinjuku, the Port City) released in 1979 by Mori Shin'ichi.

Shinjuku wa minatomachi
Kokoro yakitsukushi senaka marume
Mihatenu yume wo kataritsugu machi
Dare mo samishisa ga nigai no darō
Ore ni niteru yatsu bakari
Shinjuku... Shinjuku... Shinjuku minatomachi

Shinjuku is the port city
It thoroughly burns the heart, it curls up one's back
It is a city which transmits unfulfilled dreams
The loneliness seems to be bitter for everyone
There are only guys like me
Shinjuku... Shinjuku... Shinjuku the port town

Shinjuku is not located near the ocean so the statement that Shinjuku is the port city must therefore be viewed as a metaphor. Mita suggest that harbour can symbolise nostalgia, exoticism or aspiration, yet none of these positive terms fit with the description of Shinjuku as a port in the song. It seems more fitting to see it as a metaphor for transience. A port is a place where a ship comes in, unloads its goods, loads new goods, then takes off. In the same

141 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 176-177.

manner, Shinjuku is a place where happy and healthy people come, they then get their hearts and their backs broken, only to leave after a while. In the song, Shinjuku is seen as a place were happy people arrive only to end up gloomy and lonely.

3.5.1 Further shifts in songs about loneliness and yearning

During the 1980s, the reason for people's loneliness once again shifted. Instead of the loneliness of being absolutely alone in a big city, the loneliness in enka songs from the 1980s was largely caused by failed romance. One was only alone if one had been abandoned by the person one loved. Although there were some exceptions, like in one interpretation of "Bōkyō Sakaba" in which the protagonist is travelling to the big city completely alone. However, in songs like "Yukiguni" and "Sake yo", which have already been analysed, the loneliness is a result of being abandoned by a loved one.

In Miyako Harumi's song "Ōsaka Shigure" (Late Autumn Rain in Osaka), released in 1980, the fear of becoming lonely is even enough to evoke a strong emotional response from the protagonist.

Hitori de ikiteku nante
Dekinai to
Naite sugareba neon ga neon ga shimiru
Kita no Shinchi wa omoide bakari
Ame mo yō
Yume mo nuremasu ā Ōsaka shigure

I cried
To live alone I cannot do
And held you the neon light soaked my eyes
There are only memories in Kita-Shinchi
The drizzle is also wetting my dreams
Ah late autumn rain in Osaka

The protagonist is not lonesome at the moment, but fears that her man will leave her and therefore laments that she cannot live alone.

The popularity of songs about yearning for a loved one, as well as songs about nostalgia for "nature" seems to also have persisted during the 1980s. An example of these nostalgic songs about "nature" is Ryū Tetsuya's song "Okuhida Bojō" (Okuhida Yearning) from 1980:

Kaze no uwasa ni hitori kite

Yu no kaori koishii Okuhida-ro
Mizu no nagare mo sono mama ni
Kimi wa ideyu no neonbana
Aa okuhida ni ame ga furu

I came alone from rumours in the wind
I long for the smell of the hot spring in Okuhida
The water flows without change
You are the neon flower of hot springs
Ah the rain is falling in Okuhida

"Okuhida Bojō" is written by Ryū Tetsuya himself. However, Okuhida is not his home town, but a hot spring town where he started his career as an enka singer. Ryū Tetsuya wrote this song in 1972 during a 15 days stay, however it was not until 1980 that the single was released. The song became a success for the singer, and helped him start his career as a professional enka singer.[142]

In addition to nostalgic songs about nature, nostalgic songs about the *furusato* made a return during the '80s, with songs like the previously quoted "Bōkyō Sakaba" and "Matsuri" being released in this decade. Although the song "Matsuri" can be interpreted as a song about nostalgia in general and not nostalgia towards one specific place. The reason why nostalgic songs about the *furusato* were becoming popular again might be connected to the *furusato-zukuri* project which started during the oil shocks in the 1970s and consistently increased during the 1980s. *Furusato-zukuri* means *furusato* making, or home town making, and can be explained as the process of social reproduction of culture, as a collectively constructed and shared system of customs, beliefs and symbols. *Furusato-zukuri* can be traced back to the 1973 book "Nippon Retto Kaizō Ron" (Proposal for Remodelling Japan) by former Prime Minister of Japan Tanaka Kakuei. *Furusato-zukuri* was first adopted as the affective cornerstone of Japanese domestic cultural policy in 1984 during the Nakasone administration.[143]

The loneliness one felt without a home to return to nor a loved one to return to was especially strong during the early 1990s. This is evident in the song "Koi Uta Tsuzuri", which is analysed earlier in chapter 3.3.2, as well as in the song "Haguresō" (Drifter) by Kōzai Kaori from 1991:

Nagasu namida wa kawaite mo

142 Yomiuri Shimbunsha Bunkabu, *Kono Uta Kono Kashu (ge),* (Tokyo: Shakai Shisōsha, 1997), 140-141.
143 Robertson, "Furusato Japan", 494, 504-505.

Sabishii kokoro wa kakusenai
Hoshi mo mienai kono machi de
Anata shika nai watashi
…
Hitori ga tsurai konna yoru wa
Anata wo yurusenai

Although my flowing tears are dry
I cannot hide my lonely heart
In this town where even the stars can not be seen
I have nothing but you
…
On this night when the loneliness is painful
I cannot forgive you

Since stars can symbolise hope in Japanese popular songs,[144] the protagonist in "Haguresō" seemingly finds herself in a city which holds no hope for her. She is also truly alone, since the you-person, the only other person in the protagonist's life, has done something unforgivable, maybe he has abandoned her. Similarly, in "Koi Uta Tsuzuri", the protagonist is not sure if the loneliness she feels is a result of failed romance like in "Haguresō", or if it is a result of being away from her mother and her home town.

This theme is continued in the song "Suterarete" from the mid-nineties, previously quoted in chapter 3.4.2. In "Suterarete" the loneliness is a result of having been discarded by a loved one, as well as a result of having no home to return to, possible referring to the previously discussed state of being without a home town to return to. In "Suterarete" the loneliness seemingly leads to despair and desperation.

The popularity of songs about yearning for a loved one as well as songs about yearning for the *furusato* continued during the 1990s. The nostalgia for nature which was prominent during the '60s and '70s seems to have disappeared, or it may have been assimilated into the new concept of *furusato* which arose after the *furusato-zukuri* policy was implemented.

One of the songs which might have been inspired by this new policy is the song "Secchūka" (Flower in the Snow) by Godai Natsuko, released in 1992.

Kaze ni kaze ni mure tobu kamome
Nami ga kiba muku Echizen Misaki
Koko ga furusato ganbarimasu to
Hana wa ririshii secchūka

144 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 134.

Chiisa na haha no omokage yuretemasu

A flock of seagulls fly in the wind, in the wind
The waves snarl at Echizen Misaki
This is our home town, we'll persevere
The flowers bravely blossom in the snow
Traces of their petite mother flicker

The lyrics of this song bear resemblance to the lyrics of the songs about nostalgia for nature from the '60s, '70s and '80s. However, a few key phrases demonstrate that this song is in fact about nostalgia for the *furusato*. First and foremost does the phrase "this is our home town" state that the song is about the *furusato*. Another symbol which points to *furusato* being the theme of the song is the reference to a mother, which as stated in chapter 2.3.4 is one of the characteristics of the home town. This might imply that the nostalgia for nature songs has been infused in the *furusato-zukuri* inspired enka songs from the 1990s.

Another argument in favour of this song being inspired by the *furusato-zukuri* policy is the fact that it is sung by Godai Natsuko, who was born and raised in Tokyo and is a self-proclaimed *Edokko*, which means Tokyoite with pre-modern and down town connotations. The song is therefore not about the singer's *furusato* located in a rural area of Japan, but about the concept of *furusato,* which owing to the *furusato-zukuri* policy can be found where ever one is in Japan.[145]

Songs about yearning for a loved one continued to be popular into the 21st century. However, the image of the *furusato* seems to have changed once again to the "I without a home town to return to" sentiment which started during the late '50s. One example of songs with this "I without a home town to return to" sentiment is Ishikawa Sayuri's "Namida Tsuzuri" (Tears Spelling) from 2001.

Ima sara kaereru kokyō wa nakute
Mabuta ni ukabeta yogisha no akari

I no longer have a home town to return to
The lights of the night train float past my eyelids

However, as this is a song about a recently failed romance, the home town in this song is more likely to represent the marriage of the protagonist. The warmth and security which the *furusato* symbolises have therefore been transformed into a symbol for the marriage of the

145 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 172.

protagonist. As the marriage is over, the protagonist is left without a warm and safe "home town" to return to.

Although songs about yearning for a loved one was popular in the early 2000s, songs about loneliness was not. Nevertheless, by the end of the decade several songs in my corpus use loneliness as its main motif. However, the loneliness found in the enka songs from the late 2000s seems to have begun to change from the loneliness of having no home town to return to and having no loved one to return to, to the loneliness of journeying alone. The loneliness experienced in these songs can either be a result of travelling to forget that you have been abandoned by the person you loved, or a result of travelling to get away from the person you loved. The following song from 2010, called "Matsushima Kikō" (Matsushima Travelling Journal) by Mizumori Kaori is an example of the latter.

Namida donna ni nagashite mite mo
Sugita ano hi wa kaeranai
Wakareru tame no tabi na no ni
Omokage bakari ukabimasu
Hitori Matsushima miren ga tsunoru
Anata ni mo ichido... aitakute

No matter how many tears I shed
That day which has passed will not come back
Even if it is a journey to bid farewell
Only traces of your face come to mind
Lingering affection becomes worse in solitary Matsushima
I want to see you once again

The protagonist is travelling to bid farewell, yet the yearning and loneliness only seem to grow into lingering affection.

The journeying present in many of these songs about loneliness from the late 2000s might suggest that the loneliness is transient, and that it might just be a short-lived phase which one overcomes. Other songs about loneliness from the late 2000s use different metaphors for transience:

Hikawa Kiyoshi: "Hatsukoi Ressha" (First Love Train) (2005)

Shūchaku eki no Aomori de
Kita iku fune ni norikaerya
...
Kamome ga naite tobu koe ga

Sabishiku shimiru minatomachi

At the terminal station in Aomori
I am transferring to the northbound boat
…
The seagull cries, its soaring voice
Lonesomely permeating the port town

The negative image of the port town from "Shinjuku, Minatomachi" is also present in this song, in which the port town gets soaked in loneliness by the cry of a seagull. As was the case in "Shinjuku, Minatomachi", the port town seems to be a symbol of transience. In addition both the boat and the seagull can be a metaphor for impermanence and transience.[146] It therefore seems like loneliness in this song, as well as in other popular enka songs from the period, is just a temporal emotion.

3.5.2 Changes in songs about loneliness and yearning

As suspected, the development of enka songs about romantic yearning has followed the development of songs about romantic love. Like romantic love, it has not gone through many thematic changes, although there seem to have been slight fluctuations in the popularity of this kind of songs during the last 55 years. However, themes of nostalgia and yearning for the *furusato,* as well as songs about loneliness connected to the *furusato,* seem to have gone through several phases of change. Songs about the *furusato* was popular during the 1950s, but started to decline in popularity during the '60s and '70s as more and more Japanese citizens became estranged to their *furusato*. The reason why people felt lonely when thinking about their *furusato* also shifted. First people were feeling lonely because they were away from their home towns, then people started feeling lonely because they were left behind in the increasingly depopulated rural areas of Japan. Eventually loneliness ceased to be connected to the image of the *furusato* in enka songs.

The hypothesis stated in the introduction of this chapter therefore seems to hold true. This is not all that surprising. The rapid urbanization was already starting to diminish during the fifties and sixties. The state of being a person who moved from the countryside into the city therefore became a lesser and lesser characterisation of fewer and fewer Japanese citizens. More and more people had become accustomed to living in the cities. The state of being completely alone in the city therefore resonated with fewer and fewer listeners of enka.

146 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, 134.

50 years later, during the 2000s, the majority of the listeners of enka had moved to the city a long time ago when they were younger, or were even born and raised in the cities. The *furusato* was an imaginative place for these people. I therefore suspect that the loneliness of being away from one's home town has become an alien feeling to many of the consumers of enka today. Thus, songs about the loneliness of being away from one's home town have become less and less popular. This can be viewed as another indication that there has indeed occurred some changes in the enka genre and that the genre is not as static and timeless as it may seem at first glance.

3.6 Lingering affection

Lingering affection was a topic in many of the popular enka songs released in the late 1950s. However, most of the songs in which lingering affection was a topic released during this time were about men who stated that they did not bear any lingering affection for the women they left or who had left them. An example of this is the line "Throw away complaints or lingering affection in the Genkai Sea" from "Muhōmatsu no Isshō" previously analysed in chapter 3.4.3. However, some of these statements did not always seem to be particularly credible. In another song by the same artist, Murata Hideo, called "Jinsei Gekijō" (Drama of life), released in 1959, this is exemplified:

Giri ga sutareba kono yo wa yami da
(...)
Anna onna ni miren wa nai ga
Nazeka namida ga nagarete naranu
Otoko-gokoro wa otoko de nakarya
Wakaru mono ka to akirameta

If duty dies out this world becomes dark
(…)
I do not bear any lingering affection towards such a woman
Yet somehow I cannot help shedding tears
A man's heart, one must be a man
Even though I understood I was disappointed

This is another song in which the hardship felt by men because of the conflict between duty and passion is the central theme. The protagonist cannot stop doing his duty as a man, he can therefore not allow himself to feel lingering affection towards someone. Yet, the tears he

sheds show that he might indeed feel some lingering affection towards a former loved one. He understands that duty must take priority over his emotions, but he is disappointed by this.

Mita connects the popularity of men's song containing the miren motif in the 1950s with the increased suicide rates which reached its peek in the years between 1954 and 1959. Mita's reasoning for this connection is related to the same reasons that men's song about disappointed love were very popular during the "ill fortune" period of the 1930s, a period with recessions and high unemployment rate in Japan. The high suicide rates in the 1950s were similarly caused by a high unemployment rate and a large number of bankruptcies. The songs with the miren motif from this decade can therefore be said to express feelings of loss and lingering affection from a wider variety of life situations. This might be the reason these songs became so popular.[147]

Men continued to deny experiencing lingering affection during the '60s in songs such as "Rōkyoku Komoriuta", which was previously analysed in chapter 2.4.3. The song contains the following line: "I do not harbour any lingering affection for my wife who ran away", a rather clear denial, although not necessarily true. The lingering affection of women was also present during this decade in songs such as Misora Hibari's "Kanashii Sake":

Aa wakareta ato no kokoro nokori yo
Miren na no ne ano hito no omokage

Ah, the regrets after a break up
Lingering affection for the traces of that person

The lingering affection in the above songs seems to adhere to the general view of lingering affection in enka songs. The lingering affection of the protagonist is due to heartbreak caused by being left by her man. The woman in the song also exemplifies loyalty, beauty and passivity through her lingering affection, all of which adhere to the normal emotional patterns in enka. The previously mentioned suggestion that lingering affection is part of "femaleness" is also evident when comparing the two songs quoted in the above paragraph.

The number of popular enka songs which use miren as a motif seem to have increased during the 1970s. Yet, at the same time, the songs in which the protagonist rejected lingering affection started to include female songs as well as male songs. The song "Keiko no Yume wa Yoru Hiraku" (The Dreams of Keiko Open at Night) by Fuji Keiko, released in 1970, is an example of this:

147 Mita, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*. 77-79.

Ichi kara jū made baka deshita
Baka nya miren wa nai keredo
Wasurerarenai yatsu bakari
Yume wa yoru hiraku yume wa yoru hiraku

Without exceptions I was foolish
Although the fool has no lingering affection
I have only had guys I cannot forget
The dreams open at night, the dreams open at night

As in "Jinsei Gekijō", which was previously analysed in this chapter, Fuji Keiko claims that, as a fool, she cannot harbour any lingering affection. Yet in the next line she states that she still cannot forget all the men she has had romantic relations with, which indicates that she is indeed feeling some kind of lingering affection.

3.6.1 Changes in the miren motif

Feelings of lingering affections seem to have declined in popular enka songs during the '80s. However, some songs which used the miren motif like "Okuhida Bojō" were still released during the decade. "Okuhida Bojō" is interesting because in the song the motif of lingering affection is not placed in the sphere of romance. In "Okuhida Bojō" the protagonist seems to actually feel lingering affection towards a place, Okuhida, instead of feeling lingering affection towards a lost love:

Nasake no fuchi ni saita tote
Sadame kanashii nagare-bana
Miren nokoshita sakazuki ni
Omokage yurete mata ukabu
Aa Okuhida ni ame ga furu

Even if it is blooming on the edge of compassion
Its destiny is sorrowful flowing flower
In the sake cup where lingering affection lies
Traces sway and again rise to the surface
Ah, the rain is falling in Okuhida

As explained in chapter 3.5.1, "Okuhida Bojō" is part of a series of songs about nostalgia for "nature". The lingering affection the protagonist is expressing in this song might therefore just as well be feelings of lingering affection towards Okuhida as feelings of lingering affection towards someone he experienced while staying at Okuhida.

Lingering affection seems to continue to be a major motif in popular enka songs released during the 1990s. In addition, none of the protagonists seem to try to deny that they bear any lingering affection during this decade either. Men also started to admit to feeling lingering affection towards someone, although in one song the man tries to wash away the lingering affection with alcohol, as if trying to forget or deny the feeling:

Itsuki Hiroshi: “Sake Hitori” (Sake Alone) (1998)

Omokage ni nomu sake na no ka
Miren wo suteru sake na no ka
Waza to tsumetaku se wo muketa no ni
Otoko-gokoro ga musebu yowa
Aa horete setsunai hito no hana

Am I drinking for your vestige?
Am I drinking to discard lingering affection?
Even though I purposely cold-heartedly turned my back on you
At the dead of night a man's heart gets smothered
Ah, it is painful to fall in love with someone

As explained in chapter 2.4.3, miren is seen as something which only women experience and is often something men try to distance themselves from. Yet, the protagonist admits to feeling lingering affection in this song, although he is trying to wash away the feeling with alcohol. However, other tropes of manliness are still present in the songs. For example, it was the man himself who cold-heartedly left his woman, which is common in enka songs.

The trend where men could also harbour feelings of lingering affections continued into the 21st century with songs such as the previously quoted “Ōi Okkake Otojirō”. Women also continued to harbour lingering affections. Miren was a recurring emotional theme in Mizumori Kaori's songs. Her song “Aki no Miyajima” (Miyajima in Aki) released in 2009 is not an exception:

Miren to iu na no kokoro no kiri wa
Itsu ni nattara haremasu ka
Anata wo wasureru onna tabi
Kyō de owari ni shitai kara
Aki no Miyajima yūhi no umi yo
Umare kawareru ashita ga hoshi...

The fog of the heart called lingering affection
When will it be cleared

A woman's journey to forget you
Because I want to end it today
The setting sun in the ocean of Miyajima in Aki
I want a tomorrow where I can be born again

The protagonist in “Aki no Miyajima” is trying to run away from the still lingering affection. It is unknown if her journey will help her escape from the lingering affection she is feeling, However, she at least has hope that tomorrow will be a brighter day. When comparing this song with earlier enka songs like “Kanashii Sake” it becomes evident that the way women experience lingering affection has not changed in the last 50 years.

3.6.2 Closing words on lingering affections

The motif of lingering affection does not seem to have changed significantly over the past 55 years. Lingering affection is shown as something aesthetic, often connected with symbolic words or phrases such as “the traces of that person”. It is also often shown as something one runs away from or tries to forget by drinking, although this nearly always seems to prove impossible.

The only change that seems to have occurred in the emotional theme of lingering affection is connected to gender. During the first decades, miren was always something women embraced and men denied having, sometimes unsuccessfully. The reason for this is that lingering affection is regarded as part of “femaleness”. It is also connected to the conflict between duty and human emotion which is an often found motif in male enka songs. Men have to sacrifice their passion in order to do their duty as a man, or sacrifice duty in order to live out their human emotions. Lingering affection is thought to be too strong of an emotion, men must therefore not dwell on lingering affection in order to perform their duty as men.

However, during the '70s women also started to deny having lingering affection in enka songs, as they became more passionate and sexualized. The “good wife, wise mother” paradigm which modern Japan was built upon was starting to be replaced with a vision of women as “good mistress, wise bar hostess”.[148] A few decades later, men started to embrace their lingering affections as well. First for objects outside the sphere of romance, then later inside the sphere of romance as well. This can be seen as a result of the gap between the genders closing due to the gender equality movement reaching Japan, and maybe even reaching the highly gendered enka industry.

148 Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 168.

Chapter IV: Conclusion and objects for further study

This thesis started out explaining that enka is seemingly a static genre in which a song made in the 2000s can be mistaken for one made in the 1970s. The introduction also stated that enka is a genre which gives the impression of singing the heart/soul of Japan. Since it sings the heart/soul of Japan, it is only reasonable to believe that as Japan changes, so does the enka genre change as well. I tried to verify this hypothesis by first describing the thematic and emotional themes in enka songs. I then proceeded to analyse songs from different periods of time in order to see if any continuity, or discontinuity, could be found. In this last chapter of the thesis I will summarise the previous chapters and conclude my findings.

4.1 Changes

The emotional theme of love has stayed largely unchanged. I was only able to find a couple of instances of discontinuity in this particular emotional theme when analysing the songs in my corpus.

The first minor change I found was that the Japanese word for deep love, *ai*, only started to occur in the songs in my corpus released during the late 1980s, after being almost non-existent in popular enka songs up until this point in time. As this is a still continuing trend, it is hard to tell if this is a deviation from the way love is described in enka songs, something which will gradually resolve itself, or if it can be considered a development of the genre. If the hypothesis that this is a development holds true, it might provide an example of a change in the enka genre. This development might mean that the view of romance in enka songs is changing from a focus on short-lived romance to a focus on a deeper feeling of love. Since this seems to be a continuing tendency it is too early to make any conclusion as of now. This question could make for an interesting point of departure for future study, however, as the answer to this question should become clear over the next decade or two, as newer enka songs become available for analysis. But as of now it is too early to tell what the answer might be.

The motif of loneliness in popular enka songs also seems to have gone through a few changes during the last 55 years. The changes do not occur to the emotional theme itself, instead it is a change in who it is that is perceiving the loneliness in enka songs. During the

late 1950s as well as during the 1960s, loneliness in enka songs was experienced by the few who were left behind in the rural areas of Japan after the rapid urbanization of Japan. In addition, this loneliness was often something which young urbanites perceived that the people left in his home village were experiencing.

The loneliness shifted to a much darker image of people being truly alone during the '60s and '70s. This feeling of being truly alone might have resonated with both the people left behind in the rural areas as well as with the people alone in the city with no home town to return to. Up until the early '60s, most people alone in the city at least knew that they could return to their home town if they felt too alone. But as time passed the connection with their home town started to fade more and more until they did not have a connection to their home town any more. The safety provided by the home town had therefore disappeared.

In the 1980s, the feeling of loneliness once again shifted to only include the loneliness experienced by people who had been abandoned by their loved ones. This might also have been the point in time when most Japanese identified themselves as city dwellers with no connection to rural Japan. This might also be one of the reason why the government introduced the *furusato-zukuri* policy.

During the 2000s the feeling of loneliness was still connected to failed romance. However, more often than not was the feeling viewed as transient; as something that was destined to change. This image of loneliness is quite different from the dark image of loneliness prominent during the 1960s and 1970s.

The conclusion here is that there have indeed occurred changes in how loneliness is portrayed in enka songs. The strong connection between loneliness and the rapid urbanization of Japan disappeared as a theme in enka lyrics. Instead it was replaced with the image of loneliness as a feeling one might experience for a brief time after a breakup. This might indicate that Japan is becoming a more including society. However, I do not think enka reflect Japanese society to such a degree that I can claim that statement to be a fact.

Another change in a thematic theme in enka songs is the change in the feeling of yearning and nostalgia. As was the case with loneliness, yearning and nostalgia for one's *furusato* was still present in popular enka songs released in the late '50s and in the '60s. However, during the '70s and '80s nostalgic feelings towards the home town changed into nostalgic feelings towards “nature” in general.

Nostalgic notions towards the home town returned during the '80s and '90s as the

furusato-zukuri policy came into effect. However, since the *furusato-zukuri* project made it possible for any place to be a *furusato,* the nostalgic feelings were usually not directed at a particular home town. The nostalgic feelings were instead directed at the more broad *Furusato Japan* image.

The feeling of sorrow in enka songs also experienced the same changes as the feeling of loneliness and yearning did. Sorrow as a result of being away from one's home town was a major theme in the '50s and '60's, but, like loneliness and yearning, stopped being connected to the *furusato* after this. As sorrow is often a result of deep yearning or intense loneliness, it is not surprising that sorrow followed the same development as loneliness and yearning did. After songs about sorrow in connection to the *furusato* ceased to be a major theme in popular enka songs, the feeling of sorrow was mostly caused by failed romance.

Another change to the emotional theme of sorrow is that men gradually started to express their sorrow to a greater degree than they had done earlier. This change seems to have started in the 1990s and has continues up until the present. This change also occurred in songs about lingering affection. Enka is a highly gendered genre, men love passionately but leave abruptly; women are loyal and love deeply. Miren has traditionally been considered as a feeling which women experience in enka songs. Men cannot harbour lingering affection as their sense of duty prevents them to do this. However, during the '80s and '90s men also started to admit feeling lingering affections.

This development, with men feeling a deeper feeling of sorrow after a breakup as well as feeling lingering affection in the same way women do, might indicate that even the highly gendered enka genre is experiencing a process of greater gender equality. However, answering this question is out of the scope of this thesis, although it might be an interesting point of departure for further research into gender equality in enka music.

4.2 Minor deviations

In this section I will look at items that did not really change, but instead showed minor discontinuity.

One minor deviation connected to the motif of love is that the number of popular enka songs with a romantic motif was consistently high except for in the late 1970s when only one of the songs in my corpus used romance as a motif. Songs containing the words *koi* and *ai*

also sharply decreased after reaching its highpoint during the late '80s and early '90s. However, since songs containing the word *horeru* started becoming popular during the late 90's, the number of songs featuring the motif of romance was more or less stable from the late '80s up to the present. As this thesis focuses on the usage of *ai* compared to the usage of *koi*, this development is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, this abnormality might provide an interesting point of departure for further study on the topic of love in enka songs.

Another deviation can be found in the occurrence of the keyword *yume* in enka songs from the early '90s. In both my selection of popular songs from the early '90s, as well as in Christine Yano's selection of enka songs which were popular from 1991 to 1993, the number of songs about dreams is exceptionally high. When exploring what the cause of this might be, I found that the high occurrence of songs about dreams coincide with the so-called "lost decade" in Japan. "The lost decade" was a time with high unemployment and a general sense of growing anxiety. Dreams in enka songs dwell on the past and make the fulfilment of opportunities possible. It is therefore not hard to see that songs that evoke this type of feelings would become popular during this time of hardship. As both Yano and I have concentrated on some of the most popular enka songs, it is impossible to tell if more songs about dreams were produced during the lost decade or if songs about dreams just became more popular during the period. However, this question is not relevant to this thesis, since the purpose of this thesis is to explore the changes in popular enka songs. This question, as well as a study of whether the late-2000s financial crisis led to similar changes in the genre, are interesting topics for further research.

4.3 Final remarks

It seems that only two or maybe three major changes have occurred to the thematic elements in enka songs. In addition to this, there are several points in which minor discontinuities can be found. The most interesting of this minor discontinuities is the high occurrence of the noun *yume* in popular enka songs released during the lost decade. This seems to indicate that songs with emotional themes that resonate with the listeners at certain points in time do induce changes in the genre. Although, in the case of dreams this change was only temporary.

However, more permanent changes seem to have also occurred. One of these permanent changes is the higher popularity of songs about deep love. This change started

during the late '80s and has continued up until the present. This change also seems to be connected to the decrease in popularity of songs about temporal love. However, further research into this topic is need in order to firstly see if this is only a temporal trend; secondly see if this is just a case of exchanging *ai* for *koi* without consideration for the different connotation of each word; and thirdly see if there are any reasons or external forces which made the change plausible. In order to accomplish this a deeper study on the linguistic differences between the Japanese words meaning love, as well as a larger sample of enka songs about romance are needed.

Another major change that seems to have occurred during roughly the same period is the bridging of the gap between the genders in the highly gendered enka genre. Examples of this development is that men, who traditionally have been forced to choose duty over human emotions, are starting to admit openly to feeling deeper emotions like lingering affection, deep sorrow and desire. Women also started to reject part of “femaleness” during the same period. An example of this is that women, like men, started to deny feeling deeper emotions like lingering affection. While I am uncertain if the recent changes in the emotional theme of love is a development or a deviation, I am less reluctant to declare this change a development. The reason being that this change reflects the overall change in gender equality in society as a whole, a change that is unlikely to be reversed. However, further research is needed in order to verify this theory and to study the particulars of the development of gender equality in enka music.

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Appendix: List of songs in the corpus

Following is the list of the 110 songs in my corpus. These songs were used as the basis for statistical analysis of keywords as well as for textual analysis. The list includes the name of the song as well as an English translation of the title. The list also include the artist who made the song famous; the record company who released the song or who holds the copyright; and the year the song was first released.

Aishū Ressha (Train of Sorrow)
Mihashi Michiya, King Records, 1956

Ajia no Kaizoku (Asian Pirates)
Sakamoto Fuyumi, SakuraStar Records, 2009

Ajisai-bashi (Hydrangea Bridge)
Jōnouchi Sanae, Sony Records, 1986

Aki no Miyajima (Miyajima in Aki)
Mizumori Kaori, Tokuma Japan, 2009

Amagi-goe (Amagi Pass)
Ishikawa Sayuri, Nippon Colombia, 1986

Anko Tsubaki wa Koi no Hana (The Young Camellia is the flower of love)
Miyako Harumi, Nippon Colombia, 1964

Bōkyō (Homesick)
Mori Shin'ichi, Victor Records, 1970

Bōkyō Sakaba (Homesick Bar)
Sen Masao, Tokuma Japan, 1981

Chindo Monogatari (Jindo Island Tale)
Tendō Yoshimi, Teichiku Records, 1996

Eisa (Getting)
Jero, Victor Records, 2009

Funakatasan yo (Mister Boatman)
Minami Haruo, Teichiku Records, 1957

Fuyu no Riviera (Winter's Coast)
Mori Shin'ichi, Victor Records, 1982

Haguresō (Drifter)
Kōzai Kaori, Polydor, 1991

Hakodate no Hito (The Woman from Hakodate)
Kitajima Saburō, Nippon Crown, 1965

Hakone Hachiri no Hanjirō (Hanjirō Eight Ri in Hakone)
Hikawa Kiyoshi, Nippon Colombia, 2000

Haku'un no Shiro (Castle of White Clouds)
Hikawa Kiyoshi, Nippon Colombia, 2003

Haru ga Kita (Spring has Sprung)
Tendō Yoshimi, Teichiku Records, 2001

Hashi (Bridge)
Kitajima Saburō, Nippon Crown, 2000

Hashiba no Watashi (Hashiba Crossing)
Itsuki Hiroshi, King Records, 2008

Hatsukoi Ressha (Train of First Love)
Hikawa Kiyoshi, Nippon Colombia, 2005

Hitori Satsuma-ro (Lonesome Satsuma Route)
Mizumori Kaori, Tokuma Japan, 2007

Hokkikō (Going Back North)
Kobayashi Akira, Nippon Colombia, 1961

Hoshikage no Warutsu (Starlight Waltz)
Sen Masao, Tokuma Japan, 1966

Ikebukuro no Yoru (Ikebukuro Night)
Aoe Mina, Victor Records, 1969

Inochi Azukemasu (I Put My Life in Your Hands)
Fuji Keiko, Victor Records, 1970

Inochi Kurenai (Crimson Life)
Segawa Eiko, Nippon Crown, 1986

Itoko-Gasa (Conical Asian Hat Wearers in Itako)
Hashi Yukio, Victor Records, 1960

Jinsei Gekijō (Drama of life)
Murata Hideo, Nippon Colombia, 1959

Jinsei Nasake-bune (Ship of Compassion for life)
Ishikawa Sayuri, Teichiku Records, 2000

Jonkara Onna Bushi (From the Sound of Strumming, a Woman's Song)
Nagayama Yōko, Victor Records, 2003

Kaero ka na (Should I Return Home)
Kitajima Saburō, Nippon Crown, 1965

Kanashii Sake (Sorrowful Sake)
Misora Hibari, Nippon Colombia, 1966

Karasu no Nyōbō (The Crow's Wife)
Nagazawa Yūko, Up-Front Works, 1998

Kawa no Nagare no Yō ni (Like the River Flows)
Misora Hibari, Nippon Colombia, 1989

Kaze ni Tatsu (Standing in the Wind)
Sakamoto Fuyumi, Toshiba EMI, 1999

Keiko no Yume wa Yoru Hiraku (The Dreams of Keiko Opens at Night)
Fuji Keiko, Victor Records, 1970

Kita no Tabi-bito (Northern Traveller)
Ishihara Yūjirō, Teichiku Records, 1987

Kita no Yado kara (From the Lodging Up North)
Miyako Harumi, Nippon Colombia, 1975

Kita Sakaba (Northern Bar)
Hosokawa Takashi, Nippon Colombia, 1982

Koi Banka (Love's Elegy)
Godai Natsuko, Sony Records, 1991

Koi Uta Tsuzuri (Love Song Spelling)
Horiuchi Takao, Polystar, 1990

Kojō (Old Castle)Mihashi Michiya, King Records, 1959

Kokoro Nokori (Heart Residue)
Hosokawa Takashi, Nippon Colombia, 1975

Kokoro-zake (Sake of the Heart)
Fuji Ayako, Sony Records, 1992

Kokoro-zashi (Ambition)
Sakamoto Fuyumi, Toshiba EMI, 1997

Kumano Kodō (Kumano Kodō)
Mizumori Kaori, Tokuma Japan, 2006

Kyōdai Ningi (Brother Duty)
Kitajima Saburō, Nippon Crown, 1965

Kyōdai-bune (Ship of Brothers)
Toba Ichirō, Nippon Crown, 1982

Matsuri (Festival)
Kitajima Saburō, Nippon Crown, 1984

Matsushima Kikō (Matsushima Travelling Journal)
Mizumori Kaori, Tokuma Japan, 2010

Meoto Kagami (Married Couple Mirror)
Tonosama Kingusu, Victor Records, 1974

Mi-re-n (Lingering Affection)
Fuji Ayako, Sony Records, 1995

Michi-zure (Fellow Traveller)
Makimura Mieko, Polydor Records, 1978

Mina no Shū (Everybody)
Murata Hideo, Nippon Colombia, 1964

Minatomachi Burūsu (Port City Blues)
Mori Shin'ichi, Victor Records, 1969

Mugi-batake (Wheat Field)
Oyonēzu, Tokuma Japan, 1989

Mugon-zaka (Silent Slope)
Kōzai Kaori, Polydor, 1993

Muhōmatsu no Isshō (The Life of Wild Matsu)
Murata Hideo, Nippon Colombia, 1958

Mukashi no Namae de Dete Imasu (I Am Going by My Old Name)
Kobayashi Akira, Nippon Crown, 1975

Murasaki Ujō (A Feeling of Purple Rain)
Fuji Ayako, Sony Records, 1993

Mushaku Ryojō (Wuxi Travelling Mood)
Okada Daisaku, Nippon Crown, 1986

Musume yo (Girl)
Ashiya Gannosuke, Teichiku Records, 1984

Nagasaki Burūsu (Nagasaki Blues)
Aoe Mina, Victor Records, 1968

Namida no Misao (The Honour of Tears)
Tonosama Kingusu, Victor Records, 1973

Namida Tsuzuri (Tears Spelling)
Ishikawa Sayuri, Teichiku Records, 2001

Namida-bune (Ship of Tears)
Kitajima Saburō, Nippon Crown, 1962

Naruto Kaikyō (Naruto Strait)
Godai Natsuko, Sony Records, 1996

Ōi Okkake Otojirō (Otojirō Chasing Ōi)
Hikawa Kiyoshi, Nippon Colombia, 2001

Okuhida Bojō (Okuhida Yearning)
Ryū Tetsuya, Trio Records, 1980

Omae to Futari (Together With You)
Itsuki Hiroshi, Tokuma Japan, 1979

Omoide-zake (Sake of Memories)
Kobayashi Sachiko, Warner Music Japan, 1979

Onna no Burūsu (Woman's Blues)
Fuji Keiko, Victor Records, 1970

Onna no Michi (Women's Way)
Pin kara Torio, Nippon Colombia, 1972

Onna no Yume (The Dreams of a Woman)
Yashiro Aki, Teichiku Records, 1975

Onna Sendō Uta (Boatwoman's Song)
Mihashi Michiya, King Records, 1955

Ōsaka Shigure (Late Autumn Rain in Osaka)
Miyako Harumi, Nippon Colombia, 1980

Ōshō (King)
Murata Hideo, Nippon Colombia, 1961

Otoko no Yoake (The Dawn of Men)
Tendō Yoshimi, Teichiku Records, 2004

Otsukisan Konbanwa (Good Evening Moon)
Fujishima Takeo, EMI Japan, 1957

Rōkyoku Komoriuta (Rōkyoku Lullaby)
Hitofushi Tarō, Nippon Crown, 1963

Sake Hitori (Sake Alone)
Itsuki Hiroshi, Tokuma Japan, 1998

Sake Jinjin (Sake Exhausted)
Itsuki Hiroshi, Tokuma Japan, 1995

Sake yo (Alcohol)
Yoshi Ikuzo, Tokuma Japan, 1988

Satsuma no Onna (The Woman from Satsuma)
Kitajima Saburō, Nippon Crown, 1968

Sazanka no Yado (The Inn of Christmas Camellia)
Ōkawa Eisaku, Nippon Colombia, 1982

Secchūka (Flower in the Snow)
Godai Natsuko, Sony Records, 1992

Semi (Cicada)
Nagayama Yōko, Victor Records, 1993

Shinjuku no Onna (Shinjuku Girl)
Fuji Keiko, Victor Records, 1969

Shinjuku, Minatomachi (Shinjuku, The Port City)
Mori Shin'ichi, Victor Records, 1979

Shinobu Ame (Enduring Rain)
Godai Natsuko, Sony Records, 1990

Shōwa Kare Susuki (Susuki Grass Withered in the Shōwa Era)
Sakura to Ichirō, Polydor Records, 1974

Suterarete (Discarded)
Nagayama Yōko, Victor Records, 1995

Takasebune (Flatboat)
Itsuki Hiroshi, Five Entertainment, 2006

Tassha de na (In Good Health)
Mihashi Michiya, King Records, 1960

Tategami (Mane)
Nagayama Yōko, Victor Records, 1996

Tōge (Mountain Pass)
Kitajima Saburō, Nippon Crown, 2004

Tōkyō da yo Okkāsan (This is Tokyo, Mother)
Shimakura Chiyoko, Nippon Colombia, 1957

Tsugaru Kaikyō, *Fuyu-geshiki* (Tsugaru Strait, Winter Scenery)
Ishikawa Sayuri, Nippon Colombia, 1977

Tsuioku (Reminiscence)
Itsuki Hiroshi, Tokuma Japan, 1987

Umiyuki (Ocean Snow)
Jero, Victor Records, 2008

Uso (Lie)
Nakajō Kiyoshi, Canyon Records, 1974

Wakai Futari (Young Couple)
Kitahara Kenji, Nippon Colombia, 1962

Wakare no Ippon Sugi (Lone Cedar of Farewell)
Kasuga Hachirō, King Records, 1955

Wakare no Tōdai (The Lighthouse of Farewells)
Kasuga Hachirō, Kings Records, 1958

Yagiri no Watashi (Yagiri Ferry)
Hosokawa Takashi, Nippon Colombia, 1982

Yawara (delicate)
Misora Hibari, Nippon Colombia, 1964

Yo-zakura Oshichi (Seven Cherry Threes in the Night)
Sakamoto Fuyumi, Toshiba EMI, 1994

Yokohama, Tasogare (Yokohama, Twilight)
Itsuki Hiroshi, Tokuma Japan, 1971

Yukiguni (Snow Country)
Yoshi Ikuzo, Tokuma Japan, 1986

Yumeoi-zake (Dream-Chasing Sake)
Atsumi Jirō, Sony Records, 1978